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EASTERN ENGLAND,

FROM

THE THAMES TO THE HUMBER.

VOL. II.

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EASTERN ENGLAND,

FROM

THE THAMES TO THE HUMBER.

BY

WALTER WHITE,

AUTHOR OF

"A LONDONER'S WALK TO THE LAND'S END," "A MONTH IN YORKSHIRE," AND OTHER BOOKS OF TRAVEL.

"Tout est voyage dans le voyage de la vie, tout est sujet de causerie entre vieux ami."
GEORGE SAND.

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a. c.

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CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

Tetford—Mercian Twang—A boiled Bug—A Chalky Transformation—Good Farming—Great Increase of Cultivation—Wolds at Sunset—Louth—Mercian Talk—Teetotumers—A Church to be proud of—Railway again—Alford—Burgh—Firsby—The Fens again—The Clough and Water Supply—Wainfleet—Decay of Drinking—The Grammar School—An Invitation—A Nap in a Churchyard—Level and very Level—Trees are Trees—The Tofts—Gibraltar Point—Northern Horn of the Wash—Leagues of Sand—Cocklers—Shallow Sea—The Silver Pit—The Dogger Bank—Skegness—A Dish of Mercury—Yants and Sloshways—The Shore—Dulness and Diversity—Binks—Ingoldmell's Point—Lonesome Cot and old Cottagers—Sutton—The Jolly Tobaccos—The Shore by Moonlight 1

CHAPTER II.

Jolly Bacchus—The Pull-over—Thorpe and Thorpesmen—Mablethorpe—A Young Town—Photographer and Diagrams—We do n't want Anything—Slime and Sand—Brame-berries—Saltfleet—Dinner and Dulness—Good-bye to Waynfleet—Wagons and Ricks—A Mawkin—Thruff the Ma'shes—North Somercotes—Grainthorpe—Tetney Lock—More Dialect—Small Proprietors—Fat Crops—Rustic preference of New Times—Delightful Start—Irish Tramps—The Humber—The Spurn—Reminiscences—Sea-Holly—Cleethorpes—Grimsby—Excursionists sold—Havelok the Dane—The

PAGE

little Boat and its Burden—The Quack Doctor—Honest Labourer—Cheap Halters—Three kinds of Faces—Queer Names — A Dead Watchmaker — Thornton Abbey — New Holland—Ferry to Hull 17

CHAPTER III.

A Windy Voyage—Barton—Hessle—Ferriby—Trent and Ouse —Adlingfleet—Isle of Axholme—Once drowned now drained —Foreign Settlers—A Flood—Hang the Dutchman—Coarse Food—Bad Travelling—Keadby—Althorpe—West Butterwick — Breakfast and Gossip — Ware Oegre — The four Rivers — Stripes of Tillage — Fertile Landscape — Epworth Church—The Rector's Tomb—Traditionary Footprints—A noble Lesson—The Rector's Jest—Wide Prospect—Hatfield Chace—Small Estates—A self-handed Set—Keen after the Land — Methodists — Ironmonger and Barber — Vegetative Chequers—Haxey—Wroot: out of England—Comfortable Pedler—Experimental Gipseys—Stockwith—Trent Bank—Oil Mills—Gainsborough—The Old Hall and John Wesley 30

CHAPTER IV.

Railway again—View into Nottinghamshire—Flying Notes—The Fossdyke—Saxilby—Lincoln—Was, is, and shall be—The Bridge—The Stone Bow—The Strait—Steep Hill—The Jews' House — Sweet Sir Hugh — The Bail — Castle and Prison — Ermine Street — Newport Gate — Stukeley's Description—Lindum Colonia—Fragments of Walls—Pleasure for Mind and Eye—The Mint Wall—St Paul's—The first Church — Glimpses of History — Giraldus Cambrensis — Bishop Grossetete and the Friar—Exchequer Gate—View of the Cathedral—Imposing Effect—Diabolic Overlooker—Exuberant Architecture—Fascinations of Sculpture—Roman Relics — Great Tom — A Vast Prospect — Robin Hood's Country — The Witham — The Poet's Description — The Minster Yard—Below-hill—Old Churches—The Conduit—John of Gaunt's Palace—New and Old Lincoln 43

CHAPTER V.

PAGE

Lincoln Heath—First-rate Farming—Surprising Transformation — What Mr Pusey saw — What Arthur Young saw — Dunston Pillar—Romans, Angles, Kings, and Corpses—The Green Man—Bottle Conjurors—Navenby—Wellingore—Welbourne—Leadenham—Proud of the Church—Fulbeck—Pleasant Scenery—Caythorpe—Thick end of a Mile—Barkston—Cervus non Servus—Syston—Belton: a wonderful Church—Grantham—Isaac Newton's Battle—The Grammar School—The Schoolboy—The Way to Fame—The Angel—Peter's Hill—Statue of Newton—The Inauguration—Lord Brougham's Address—The Snore—The Breakfast—Monckton Milnes—Sir Benjamin Brodie—Professor Owen—The Bishop of Lincoln 61

CHAPTER VI.

Walk to Belvoir—Harlaxton—A Footpad—The Rutland Arms—An Early Stroll—Memorable Places—The French marching to Lincoln Fair—Crabbe's Curacy and Rectory—Lordly Terraces—The Battery—The Woods—The Duke's Walk—The Mausoleum—The Castle—Beauties of Art—Another Start—Another Prospect—Swish athurt—The Drift—The Three Queens—A Trudge through Stubble—Stoke Rochford—A Model Village — Mathematical Farmer — The Great North Road—Colsterworth—A Deserted Village—Woolsthorpe—English Montpellier—Newton's Birth-place—The Sun-dial—A Talk with the Mistress—The Birth-Chamber—The Study—The Apple-tree—Twilight Thoughts .. 71

CHAPTER VII.

Colsterworth to Corby—Hereward and Burghley—Stamford—Antiquarian Explorations—Stukeley's House—Terra-Cotta Works—Burghley House—Picturesque Exterior—Magnificent Interior — Stately Trees — Idle Thoughts — Gerarde, Verrio, Stothard—Landscape Painter and Village Maiden—John Jones and Sarah Hoggins — Moralizing Baker — St Martin's Church—The Lord Treasurer's Tomb—Whither

PAGE

next? — Suggestions — Thorney—Peterborough—Huntingdon—Whittlesey—Oakham—Stamford a good Starting-point 87

CHAPTER VIII.

A long Leap—Diss—Cross the Waveney—Suffolk—Hoxne—The Royal Martyr—Eye—Haughley—Shabby Carriages—Tricks on Travellers—Traces of Abbot Sampson—Woolpit—Bury St Edmund's—A Gentlemanly Town—The Abbey Gatehouse—Ruins and Architecture—The Botanic Garden—Relics—River Lark—Abbot Sampson's Bridge—The Abbot's Willow—The Barons' Oak—St Edmund's Shrine—The Reliques—A Prospect—Abbot Sampson's Judgment-Hall—Ickworth—Bloomfield's Home and Haunts—Norman Belltower—The Abbot's Reception—The Churchyard—St Mary's Church—Mary Tudor—Edmund Calamy—The Jews' House—Defoe—Famous Scholars 97

CHAPTER IX.

A Walk before Supper—Little Welnetham—Bradfield Combust—Burial-place of Arthur Young—Farmfull Landscapes—Dwellers from the Conquest—Moated Houses—Brettenham—Bildeston—Hitcham—Rev. Professor Henslow—An Invitation—The Rectory—Scientific Ways and Means—The Village School—The Botanical Lesson—Dissections—Apt Dissectors—The Lecture—Hard Words made Easy—Chemistry of a Potato—Puzzling a Curate—The Rector's Plans, Prospects, and Reminiscences — Half-penny Specimens — Moral Aspects — What Hitcham was — Beginnings of Enlightenment — How to keep the Mind awake — Pig-headed Farmers—Allotments for Ever—Down with the Tithe Dinner—Holiday Excursions—A Silver Cup for the Rector—Incident in Kew Gardens—Flower Shows—Lecturets—Self-help Promoted—Good-night—A great Sorrow 108

CHAPTER X.

Walk to Hadleigh—Colchester—Troops for India—Uproar and Fighting—An Arrival—An Exploration—Birth-place of Con-

PAGE

stantine — The Nymph's Appeal — Giants — St Botolph's Priory—The Castle—St John's Gate—Ugly Camp—The Roman Wall—In Memoriam—By Omnibus—Estuary of the Colne—Mersey Island—Touches of Dialect—Wheeley—Thorpe-le-Soken—Kirby—Walton on the Naze—Its Aspects and Habits—A Lobster, Sir!—Frinton Church—The Lighthouse—Off to the Steamer—A windy Voyage—Harwich—A dull Town—The Packet Port—The Ferry—A growl at the Wind—Walton Ferry—Felixstow—Short Commons—Saltmarsh and Sand—Terraces in the Future Tense—Bernard Barton's Fairyland—Coprolites—Estuary of the Deben—Orfordness—Wading against the Wind—Landguard Fort—A dangerous Tongue—The Encampment—Ferry-House Dinner—A hard Row—Atalanta—Up the Orwell—Ipswich 131

CHAPTER XI.

The Eye of Suffolk—Vale of Gipping—Ransome's Factory—Stacks of Implements—Ploughs to wonder at—Ingenious Contrivances—Clever Threshing Machine—Farming Tools—Casting uneasy Chairs—Tons upon Tons—Treenails and Wedges—Alas, for the Oaks!—Saw and Buz—Trimming and Squeezing—Kreosoting—Fit for any Climate—Firewood—Moral Matters—The Cardinal's College Gate—A Recent Wolsey, a Butcher — The Old House — The Museum — Stirring News—A Shoe-factory—Woodbridge—The Deben — Rural Landscape — The Seckforde Fund: a Fortune or Misfortune? — Saxmundham — A Captain's Recreation — Aldborough — New Day, new Life — A Mixed Town — Crabbe's Birth-place — The Alde, a capricious River — Crabbe's Work-place: Warehouse and Church 151

CHAPTER XII.

A seaside Walk—Aldborough Mere—Waifs of Wreck—East Anglian Talk—Sizewell—The Vulcan Arms—Minsmere—Ruined Churches—Ups and Downs—Southwold Bay—A Resting-place—A Battle and a Ballad—The Earl of Arling-

PAGE

ton's Letter—The Earl of Ossory's Gallop—Far travelling of Sound—The old Tower—The old Priory—Dunwich, Past and Present—Rustic Talk—Walberswick—River Blythe—Southwold—A beneficial Town—The Coast-guard—Fishermen's Lounge—No Light wanted—A fresh Departure—Easton Broad—Covehithe Broad—Encroachments—Covehithe Ness—A Pleasant Common—Kessingland—Farewell to Frolics—Grindstone Cheese—Meeting and Greeting—Pakefield—Lowestoft—Sand-drift—New Town and Old Town—Promenade Pier—The Easternmost Land—Mutford—Oulton Broad—The Yacht again 163

CHAPTER XIII.

A Frolic—The Waveney—A Crooked River—Beccles—Up the Taw—About Ale—Shipmeadow Lock—Foul Wind—Walk to Bungay—Fragment of a Castle—The Earl and the King of Cokenay—Somerleyton—St Olave's—A Walk—Burgh Castle—Roman Camp, Walls and Towers—Confluence of Yare and Waveney—Breyden Water—Prospect of Yarmouth—Two Ends of a Walk—Turning Point—Effects of Sunshine—A Rough-and-ready Spokesman—A Talk about Working Men—Return to the Yacht 180

CHAPTER XIV.

Another Flight—A fresh Start—Lavenham—A Footpath Way—A Scene for a Painter—River Brent—Monks Eleigh—Justice in Olden Time—Panorama of plenty—Happy Farmer—Dialect—Sudbury—A Change of Morals—Religion and Politics from a Landlord's Point of View—St Peter's Church—The Stour—A Drive—Shrewd Driver—The Busiest Bishop—Little Maplestead—The Round Church—Castle Hedingham — Norman Keep — Sible Hedingham — Sir John Hawkwood—A Talk in a Church—Halstead—A cluster of Colnes—Tombs of the De Veres—What De Bohuns and Guyons have come to—Relics—Greenstead Green—Stanstead Hall—A Brisk Walk—The Mangle-turner—Coggeshall—Feering—Landlady's Praises—Fertile Landscape—A critic on Tiptree—Messing 191

CHAPTER XV.

PAGE

Tiptree Hall—Mr Mechi's Farm—Are you the Bailiff?—Surprising Grass—Reforming a Farm—Replacing the Buildings—How to Feed—Improved Pigstyes—Mr Mechi on Live Stock—The Tank—Steam Engine, Pipes, and Fertilizing Showers—Crops and Meat—Devonshire Farmers—About the Farm—A few Words on the Food Question—Alas! for Rural Landscapes—Tiptree Heath—Braxted—Estuary of the Blackwater—Tottum's Cock-a-Bevis Hill—Wickham Bishop's—Thomas Tusser—John Ray—Ad Ansam—The Blackwater—Witham—Chelmsford—Broomfield—A Mistake that ends well—An Essex Farm—Thousands of Gallons of Milk—Transformation of Fields—Competing Crops .. 205

CHAPTER XVI.

A Drive to Pleshy—Roman Camp and Norman Castle—The Duke of Gloucester—A Royal Visit—A false Guest—A Journey, an Arrest, and a Death—Reminiscences from Shakespeare—A happy Supper—Engines and Implements—Farming by Steam—The Scarifier—A Lesson in Scarifying—Rustic Engineers—The Drainer—Self-sown Crop—A Drive to Dunmow—Clover and Bees—Tusser again—Little Dunmow—The Old Priory—Matilda the Fair—The Flitch-winners' Chair—The Wife of Bath—The Oath—Braintree—Stisted—A round Perambulation—Broomfield Priors—Chelmsford—Picturesque Touches—Danbury Hills—The Rodney—On Foot again—About Chamberlen—Maldon—Chelmer and Blackwater—Botanical Bagman 219

CHAPTER XVII.

The Hundreds—Change of Scene—Latchingdon—A Word about Tiptree—Where be We?—Althorne—Remarkable Prospect—Twenty-seven Years' Overtime—Fairyland—Burnham—River Crouch—Oyster Beds and Boats—Poachers—The Company—A Talk about Oysters—Dredge and Dredging—Culling over—Enemies—Tricks of Trade—Beds

PAGE

of Skultch—Young Oysters—Singling—Sowing—Essex Breeding, Kentish Feeding—In Season and out of Season—An Invitation—Another Start—River-side Aspects—The Ferry—Foulness—Muddy Landing—Fat Fertility—Foul Roads, Fair Paths—Three Ways to Shoeburyness—Eastwick Head—The Oversands Way—A Dreary Scene—Spectral Commerce—Nothing much to speak of—The Broomed-out Way—Creeky Shore—The Maplin—The Nore—Wakering Stairs—River-bank—Strange Aspects—Shoeburyness 230

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Commandant—The Camp—Huts and Houses—Lecture Rooms and Laboratories—School of Gunnery—Batteries—Long range Targets—Granite Target—Iron Target—Smash and Crash—Solid Butts—*Royal Albert* Target—Burst Shells—Awful Havoc—Right of Way—Swimmers—A capital Place—Sunday in the Camp—War and Worship—Swords and Guns in Church—The Sunday School—River-side Walk—Outskirts—Southend—School of Jelly-fish—Pier and Promenaders—A Two-shilling Dinner—Minories or Bethnal Green—An Ugly Ride—A Storm—Dissipation 249

CHAPTER XIX.

Gun-sheds—Double Quick—The Armstrongs—Sorts, Sizes, and Workmanship—Park of Artillery—Lecture-Rooms—Bad firing demonstrated—Working Parties—Judging of Distance—Lesson in Gun-Mounting—Severe Labour—Quick Result—The Mess-room—Lesson in Gunnery—Teaching the Officers—The Range-Party—Loading—Flag!—Strollers in the Way—Fire!—A Miss: A Hit—Volunteer Target Raisers—Change Rounds!—Dirty Work—New Bores and old Bores—Buzzing in Ears—About a Precept—Southend—Pleasure Traffic 259

CHAPTER XX.

Three Routes to the West—Leigh—The Rays—Pleasing Pros-

PAGE

pect—Lord Mayor's Limit—Canvey Island—Rayleigh and Hadleigh—Restorer of Navigation—Benfleet—Danish Pirates—Fobbing Marshes—Stanford-le-Hope—Horndon-on-the-Hill—Langdon Hills—Imposing View—A Charm and Reminiscence—Capricious Ague—Tilbury—City Men—The Fort—Royal Inscription—Bastions and Inner Works—Gunpowder Alley—Ague again—The Blockhouse—Gervase of Tilbury—The Armament—Hot Shots for Invaders .. 270

CHAPTER XXI.

Prospect of Gravesend—Grays—Chalk-pits—Copious Springs—Cunobelin's Goldmines—Purfleet—Government and Mr Whitbread—Pleasant and Picturesque—Chalk Cliffs and Cosy Nooks—View to the Forest—Inside the Wall—Agreeable Quarters—The Powder Magazine—No Admittance—A Ticket for Botany—Sansum—Beacon Hill—Shady Paths and Open Prospects—Greenhithe and Erith—Floating Reformatory—The great River and Throng of Ships—Rainham—Dagenham Lake—Summer Residence of Elizabeth Fry—River Wall—Dagenham Breach—The Marshes—Resort for Anglers—Barking—The Bell Tower—The Abbey—More no More—Region of Ings—River Roding—Barking Creek—Lonely Walk—East Ham—Gallions Reach—Musing—The Last Walk—Change of Scene—Drainage Works—Antiquities and Echoes—North Woolwich—Gipsy Camp—Plaistow Level—London over the Border—Undesirable Tenants—Vale of Lea—The Danes—Queen Maud's Bridge—Eastern Suburbs—End of a Holiday 282

CHAPTER XXII.

By way of Farewell 303

INDEX 308

ERRATUM.

Page 93, *last line, for* Youge *read* Yonge.

EASTERN ENGLAND

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CHAPTER I.

Tetford—Mercian Twang—A boiled Bug—A Chalky Transformation—Good Farming—Great Increase of Cultivation—Wolds at Sunset—Louth—Mercian Talk—Teetotumers—A Church to be proud of—Railway again—Alford—Burgh—Firsby—The Fens again—The Clough and Water Supply—Wainfleet—Decay of Drinking—The Grammar School—An Invitation—A Nap in a Churchyard—Level and very Level—Trees are Trees—The Tofts—Gibraltar Point—Northern Horn of the Wash—Leagues of Sand—Cocklers—Shallow Sea—The Silver Pit—The Dogger Bank—Skegness—A Dish of Mercury—Yants and Sloshways—The Shore—Dulness and Diversity—Binks—Ingoldmells Point—Lonesome Cot and old Cottagers—Sutton—The Jolly Tobaccos—The Shore by Moonlight.

Beyond Tetford the road curves steeply up the great ridge of wolds that shut in our prospect as we descended a few hours ago towards Somersby. From the brow your eye views a broad rural vale; the village spreading itself out by the big pond, and gardens dotted with bee-hives. Some of the women there have a very Danish look: I saw one who might have sat to

Scott for the hardy woman represented in his picture of the Danes landing at Tynemouth, painted for the hall at Wallington. Listen to the villagers' talk, and you will hear at this north-eastern extremity of Mercia similar sounds, but with a harder twang, to those of the Berkshire rustic who says "a sharp marnin', Jarge."

A little tale that seems worth the telling recurred to my mind as I looked back on the spot of green above Somersby: if repeated here it will serve to relieve the dry remarks we may have to make about husbandry before sunset. The vicar of that little village was dining once with Sir Joseph Banks, when the Baronet said, "Do you know, Doctor, there is scarcely anything in the animal or vegetable world that I have not cooked and tasted." "Then you must have eaten strange things," answered the vicar. "I have, Doctor; but there was only one thing that ever got over me." "Indeed! what was it?" "I 'll tell you, Doctor; it was a boiled bug. I could n't stomach that."

As the whiteness of the road shows, we are here upon the chalk; quarries of chalk and lime-kilns occur at intervals; and on the table-land of the summit we see the results in luxuriant-looking crops of turnips and wheat, and tall thick hedgerows that would not disgrace Devonshire. The transformation worked by chalk is little less than wonderful. When Arthur Young travelled through Lincolnshire in 1799 he saw leagues of wild waste lands, where nothing grew but gorse, heath, and nettles, and nothing lived but rabbits, and the rent, if paid at all, was only two rabbits an acre, which are now overspread by farms varying from three

hundred to one thousand acres in extent. On these farms you may see some of the best cultivation in the kingdom accomplished by abundant chalking. It was necessary to create a soil which would not blow away from the exposed heights, and afford holding ground for roots; and the means were supplied by chalk. And, as the wold farmers know, the chalking must be repeated at intervals of a few years with from sixty to one hundred cubic yards to the acre, which after mellowing they harrow in with an implement known in the Parts of Lindsey as a 'devil.' In some places they plough their fields in one great spiral furrow, beginning at one corner and ending in the middle. The landlord profits by this system as well as the tenant; for where a farmer must maintain a soil he cannot impoverish the land. That it is profitable may be inferred from the fact, that since the beginning of the present century two hundred and thirty thousand acres of wheat-bearing land have been added to the resources of the county by the cultivation of the wolds.

From the highest part of the table-land we can look across the flat lands to where the dusky green merges in the blue sea. The outer edge of that dusky belt, where we shall scent the brine and hear the breakers, will be our route a day or two hence. For the present these windy heights afford us prospect wide enough; and now that the sun is low the great slopes appear all purple and bronze, broken by dark intervening shadows, whereby the landscape assumes an unwonted beauty. Then as the sun drops, the boisterous wind dies away to a gentle breeze; and the purple disappears, and the bronze darkens, and the white-washed farm-buildings

gleam strangely in the twilight. Now the road descends suddenly into gloom, now mounts steeply, always between fields; until by the light of the great round moon which is rising behind us we discern the tall spire of Louth; and in half an hour more our walk of eleven miles from Somersby will be ended.

Lincolnshire folk always pronounce the name of the town with two syllables—Lou-uth, which is as good a shibboleth as *while* for their identification wherever you hear it. Is the name derived from that of the little river Ludd?

I felt curious to see the tradesmen's way of recreation after shop-shutting, and went to an inn where a numerous party sat in a low room smoking and drinking, and betting on the spins of a teetotum for 'goes' of gin-and-water. I endured the obnoxious atmosphere for two hours in the hope of hearing witty, or humorous, or sensible talk; but what I heard may be judged of from the following specimens:

"Wen't ye keäm in?" (come in).

"Nay, I shan't keäm in."

"Na cheeätin' this toime."

"Oy want my watch mending."

"Oy wen't take nawthin' for 'n."

"Oy wen't let ye look at 'n."

"Hev ye sin his herse?" (horse).

"Na, but oy've heerd saäy he 's a loiar."

To spin their rattling toy, lay three-penny bets, empty their glasses, and make a noise with their Mercian talk, was recreation enough for these shopkeepers of Lou-uth. And once during the evening the maid called out to an impatient customer in

another room, "Inkstand can't be hed while missus done wi 't."

How true to the life is that which has since been written:

"Doctors, they knaws nowt, for a says what 's nawways true:
Naw soort o' koind o' use to saäy the things that a do.
I 've 'ed my point o' yaäle ivry noight sin' I beän 'ere,
An' I 've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight for foorty year."

Besides a Grammar School which once reckoned Alfred Tennyson among its youthful scholars, Louth has a church to be proud of as well as Boston, with a crocketted spire shooting up to a height of two hundred and eighty-eight feet. The tracery of the east window, the tower, buttresses, and pinnacles, and the flying buttresses springing therefrom, present details of the Perpendicular which repay examination. The view from the top of the tower is disappointing, for the town lying low at the eastern foot of the wolds is cut off from any prospect towards the west, except that of great slopes which overtop the spire. In the other direction it embraces the sea. The environment generally is pleasanter than that of other towns along this eastern border.

To carry out my plan of walking along the coast, I journeyed southwards by railway to Firsby, the nearest station to Wainfleet, passing Alford and Burgh (or Borough), and surveying the marshy levels on the left, and on the right the great slopes of the wolds, which show gleaming patches of white wherever a field has been newly ploughed. At Firsby the fenny features prevail; and "Ye 'll want to get on the bank

for the gainest way to Wainfleet," was an advice that saved me from the circuitous highway. The distance is about six miles, all pasture and drains; and patches of tall thistles; and reeds shooting up spear-like through the hedgerows, and distant windmills.

The Steeping, a little crooked river that flows down from the wolds, is the water supply for Wainfleet above the clough, and its haven below. Clough—pronounced with the same terminal sound as plough—is the local name for a sluice-gate. "If 'twas n't for the clough," said the landlord of the *Red Lion* where I replenished, "the tide 'ud come up and spoil all the water and swim all the land. People wen't drink pump-water." The pump-water must be bad where a weedy stream in a narrow sludgy bed is preferred.

The little town has enough of good houses to justify old Leland's description, "a praty market stonding on a creke nere to the se." "'T was a roughish place twenty year ago," remarked the landlord; "but 't is dull now, and there ain't nothing like the drinkin' there used to be. 'T was a treat," he continued, "to hev a talk with a stranger, and he wished I 'd stay an hour or two longer; but if I could n't he 'd go and show me the gainest way to Old Gib." As we went out a man addressed an inquiry concerning a horse to the landlady, who answered, "I 've nowt to do wi' the herse."

In my way to the foot-path I turned aside to look at the "most notable thing" in the town, which, in the words of the antiquary above quoted, is "the schole that Wainflete, Bishop of Winchestre, made and endowid with x *li.* lande." It stands among trees on

the edge of the meadows, built of that excellent red brick which has preserved to us many a stately house of the fifteenth century: an oblong structure with two turrets and a pointed window and doorway at the west end. The builder was a carpenter of Tattershall, who had probably helped in the erection of the castle there; and of him it is written in a letter addressed to the Bishop of Winchester in 1484, "he will not make you a house of 70 feet in length and 20 feet breadth, to find all manner of stuff belonging to the same, for less than £30." It appears, further, that the carpenter agreed to do his part of the work "well and sufficiently after the pattern and fashion of the floor of the chamber in the tower on the gate of the manor of Esher in the county of Surrey:" one of the Bishop of Winchester's estates. The beneficence is still active: the school here flourishes; and at Oxford the Waynflete Professor of Moral Philosophy still delivers his lectures.

While creeping quietly up the turret stair for a peep at the school-room, I noticed the hand-rail, if such it may be called; a brick moulding fashioned in the solid wall, worn smooth and polished by the hands of many a generation of school-boys. The master hearing from one of the boys that a stranger was peeping in at the half-opened door, came forward, and after a few minutes' conversation, found a reason arising out of some book which he had read, for pressing me so earnestly to stay to tea, that I was fain to comply. Thereupon, to fill up my time till school should be over, he suggested a visit to an old church two miles distant, and sent one of the boys to show me the foot-path way thither. It was worth the walk to see a

church of the fourteenth century standing prettily masked with ivy in a grassy quadrangle bordered by a grove. After creeping in at an open window for a view of the inside, I lay down on the sweet-smelling new-mown hay outside to try to remember something of its history, and half an hour later awoke to the consciousness that my thinking had been beguiled by an afternoon's nap.

As we have seen, the easternmost edge of the land is one dead level from Lynn to Boston. It is the same from Boston hither; and the same shall we find it as we walk northwards. But some of the prospects around Wainfleet convey an impression of levelness which your mind will acknowledge to be complete. Looking seawards your eye ranges over a vast expanse, whereon no tree grows and no object appears to relieve the monotony: and it seems illimitable, for its low dark brown rim seems far, far off to fade away into the sky. All within appears

"A level waste, a rounding grey."

The grey, however, is apt to become black and sullen in gloomy weather. If you happened to see a man walking along that remote rim you would fancy him out of the world. Poor Mariana!

Consequently trees are trees in this region. Habitation is as much denoted by their presence in the landscape as by houses. "Isn't that a big tree?" said the boy who showed me the foot-path, as we passed an ash which would not be considered remarkable round about Compton Wynyates.

On my return to the school the boys were swarming forth; and shortly afterwards I found that staying to tea involved pleasant conversation with other guests; good music; and staying all night and sleeping in a little chamber under William of Waynflete's schoolroom.

Accompanied by one of the guests, who thought he would like to walk a few miles with me, I went the next morning to look at the Tofts, a place which has long puzzled the neighbourhood. It is a meadow intersected by numerous low straight banks or ridges, mostly parallel, with here and there a few at a right angle to the main body, which by some explorers are supposed to be the remains of a camp or defensive earthworks. Observing that they very much resemble the short ridges which you may see on a low sandy shore, I ventured a surmise that they had been formed by the action of water. Waynfleet thought he could demonstrate an artificial origin, and so we left the question where we found it.

Half an hour later and we were on our way to the sea, and the northern horn of the Wash, which, perhaps because of unlikeness, bears the name of Gibraltar Point, or Old Gib. The path here and there touching 'the haven,' as the natives call the river, showed us what enormous windings even a small stream is compelled to make in the flat lands. Below the clough mud prevails along the banks, where on some of the firmest slopes we saw a bare-legged man collecting 'samphur,' as the natives call it. And more and more naked became the region as we advanced: even the farmsteads looked windy and naked. And at last

we came in sight of the public-house on the Point, and the tower and flag of the coast-guard.

The Point, as at the mouth of other estuaries along the eastern coast, has a southerly prolongation of sand and gravel, but slightly elevated above the actual shore. It was formerly longer than at present; but the digging of gravel having very ill-advisedly been permitted, the sea broke through the excavation and washed away all the outer extremity of the Point.

What a strange desolate-looking scene it is: a broad flat patch rough with marum and sea-thorn, stretching out upon a scene yet more desolate, broad leagues of rough, wet, ripply sand, in which we behold the aspect of the Wash at low water.

At the lowest of the ebb you may walk out upon those sands three or four miles from the shore. Far off upon the horizon appeared a group of objects which I took to be fishing-boats with men moving about them; but looking through the coast-guard's telescope I discerned not boats, but horses and carts. "What are they?" I asked. "Cocklers," answered the man; and presently I discovered other carts creeping forth from Wainfleet; looking so lonesome. However, though dreary, the place is not barren; for the homely mollusk breeds there in swarms innumerable. They betray their own hiding-place by leaving on the surface a thread of green weed. Wherever you see that, insert your finger or a hook and you may draw out a cockle. A proposal was made to me to go "a-cocklin';" but the operation being very easy to imagine, I preferred to walk in the opposite direction.

No wonder with such an expanse laid bare before

their eyes that geologists have predicted the transformation of the Wash into dry land, and engineers have schemed to accelerate the process. The shallowness of many parts of the North Sea as well as the waters of the coast is well known; so much so that were the bottom to rise twenty fathoms in a line between the Wash and the Texel, we might walk across the whole way, about one hundred and seventy miles, to Holland. The depth in some places is but a few feet at low water, for off the Wash is the meeting-place of two tides, and the mud and sand poured into the North Sea by the rivers of Germany, Holland, and England, are there deposited in greater quantity than elsewhere. Not in vain does the Dudgeon lightship warn mariners of that dangerous locality. Farther out, about mid-sea lies the Well Bank, a huge shoal separated from the Dogger Bank by the Great Silver Pits, a channel scooped by strong tidal currents, and a favourite resort of fishermen. Owing to the peculiarity that all the waste carried into the North Sea is therein deposited, the growth of its shoals is continuous; from which naval surveyors and engineers have concluded that at some future day these shoals will rise above the surface and form islands. Even now the Dogger Bank—that bar of the North Sea, as it has been called—has an extent of five thousand square miles within the limit of twenty fathoms; while its most elevated parts rise to less than eight fathoms below the surface at low water. The term bar is not misapplied, for, with the general form of a three-rayed star-fish, it stretches from near Flamborough Head to the coast of Jutland, and up to the entrance to the Baltic. A sea which becomes continually shallower, and

is so much vexed by complicated currents, may well be regarded by seamen and under-writers as one of the most dangerous in the world.

From the low ridges along which we commenced our walk to the northwards I could see a large breadth of salt-marsh, an evidence that the land gains upon the water outside of the Point. At times we trod on patches of smooth green turf; then through hollows of coarse rank grass; then thickets of sea-thorn where rough ridges shut you in on all sides; then along the sand to Skegness: one of the principal watering-places of Lincolnshire. It is a scattered place not destitute of trees or hedgerows, with a broad link, to borrow the Northumbrian term, between it and the beach, and with deep drains intersecting the neighbourhood. We went to *The Vine* and dined at the long table with the sojourners, one of whom told me he meant to depart the next day because of the swarms of gnats which tormented him at night. One of the dishes contained mercury; a vegetable which I had never before seen. It is a standing dish at Skegness during the season, the table being supplied from a large bed of the plant which I saw in the garden. The flavour is agreeable, somewhat resembling that of spinach. One or two of the guests, however, pronounced against mercury as a dangerous dish. It belongs to the *Euphorbiaceæ*, a tribe of plants all more or less poisonous. Old Gerarde says it "is hot and drie, yet not above the second degree; it hath a cleansing faculty, and (as Galen writes) a digesting quality also."

Instead of turning back at Skegness as he had planned, Waynfleet resolved on going with me a mile or

two farther; and assuming the privilege of acquaintance, would take his turn with my knapsack. So we struck a diagonal to regain the beach along a bank formed by the earth dug out of the adjoining drain. The local term for a dyke-bank is 'breer;' and if you should happen to see a man digging out the mud, and ask him what he calls his gaiters, he will most likely answer 'yants' or 'splats.' Is there any connection between these terms and *gants* and *splashers?* And what is the origin of 'sloshways,' a word which signifies askew? For instance, a dam or foot-bridge crossing a drain at a deviation from a right angle is said to be placed sloshways.

Romantic scenery must not be looked for on the Lincolnshire coast. In all the journey from the Wash till you see the land of Yorkshire beyond the Humber not an inch of cliff will your eyes discover. Sand-hills varying in height and bristling with marum are the boundary between sea and land, and if no inspiration comes to you from the scene itself, or enjoyment from robust exercise, you will grow weary of the general tameness. But tame though it be the scene derives interest from its peculiarity. Strange perspective effects appear in those irregular hills: yonder they run out and form a low dark purple headland, against which the pale green and yellow of a nearer tongue look bright by contrast. Here for a few furlongs the range rises gray, cold, and monotonous; there it has a warmth of colour relieved by deep shadows that change their tint during the hours that accompany the sun while he begins and ends his day. And on those dry hills you may gather the juiciest of blackberries when inclined

for a halt; and then sitting on the summit you will remark the contrasted landscape: on the one side, the level pasture land, league after league of grassy green, sprinkled with villages, farms, churches, and schools, where work and worship will find exercise through ages yet to come; on the other, league after league of tawny sand sloping gently outwards to meet the great sea that ever foams or ripples thereupon. On the one hand, a living scene bounded by the distant wolds; on the other, a comparative desert, sea and shore alike solitary, bounded only by the over-arching sky. More thoughts come crowding into the mind in presence of such a scene than are easy to express.

On we walked enjoying the breeze and the roar of the breakers; at times close to the foamy margin, at times on an inner bank which after a while brought us once more within reach of the spray. The shore is formed of a succession of what the natives call 'binks,' which running directly northwards seem to lose themselves in the sea; and along these we walked until warned by the deepening watery hollow on our left that it was time to cross to the one next within, from which we had also to retreat at the end of a mile or so. The nearer the water the firmer the sand. On the inner banks the foothold is rarely firm, and near the hill-foot the sand is loose and painfully wearisome to the inquisitive tourist who crosses it now and then to have a chat with a coast-guard, or take a peep inland.

We passed Ingoldmells Point, where the shore is protected by ridges of wattle-work, and rows of stakes, and belts of faggots fixed in curious curves and zig-zags, to retain the shifting sand, and bar the encroach-

ing waves. A few miles farther we climbed the hills in the latitude of Huttoft, to look for fresh water, and, to our surprise, discovered a rude little cottage built against the inner slope. The old woman who came to the door gave us a drink, but as her husband had to fetch the water from a spring a mile distant, we felt constrained to pay for the draught. With a garden in front, and a few flowers creeping about it, the place looked snug and pretty. "'T was forty-six years," said the ancient dame, "since her old man built the house, and they had n't lived nowheres else. 'Twas dampish in winter-time; and in stormy weather they could feel the ground tremble from the shock of the waves. The hill kept the wind off nicely, and they did n't think the sea would break through; but when they first came to live there, the hills went thirty yards farther out than they do now." Six-and-forty years in that little nook! It is one of the loneliest dwellings I ever saw.

Waynfleet's mile or two farther lengthened continually; and as no resting-place was to be found nearer than Sutton, we walked on till nightfall, and were glad to find comfortable quarters at the *Jolly Tobaccos*, for our day's walking amounted to twenty-seven miles.

Sutton is a little watering-place, not yet sophisticated, comprising some half-dozen houses, and a coast-guard station on the inner side of the hills, and about a furlong of loose sand which must be waded through whenever you pass the gap for a sight of the sea. I pitied the horses that had to work half the night in dragging coal from a brig a-ground on the beach; and thought that a plank-road might have been within the possibilities of the neighbourhood.

Refreshed by supper, we were not too tired for a stroll on the shore, whence miles of silvery ripples were visible under the brilliant moonlight, broken by intermittent lines of glittering foam. It was a striking scene: the pale sand, and shadowy hills stretching away into indistinctness, and in the foreground the dark form of the coal brig, and the noise of unloading, and men and horses tugging painfully to and fro.

CHAPTER II.

Jolly Bacchus—The Pull-over—Thorpe and Thorpesmen—Mablethorpe—A Young Town—Photographer and Diagrams—We don't want Anything—Slime and Sand—Bramb-berries—Saltfleet—Dinner and Dulness—Good-bye to Waynfleet—Wagons and Ricks—A Mawkin—Thruff the Ma'shes—North Somercotes—Grainthorpe—Tetney Lock—More Dialect—Small Proprietors—Fat Crops—Rustic preference of New Times—Delightful Start—Irish Tramps—The Humber—The Spurn—Reminiscences—Sea-Holly—Cleethorpes—Grimsby—Excursionists sold—Havelok the Dane—The little Boat and its Burden—The Quack Doctor—Honest Labourer—Cheap Halters—Three kinds of Faces—Queer Names—A Dead Watchmaker—Thornton Abbey—New Holland—Ferry to Hull.

As I surmised, the sign under which we slept —*Jolly Tobaccos*—proved, on inquiry, to be the local way of nominating Jolly Bacchus: which curious fact is here recorded for the benefit of mythologists. It may be allowed to pass in a county where, should a damsel hold her skirts a little high, the boys cry out, "Look at hur lags;" where skaters describe smooth ice as "glib;" where weasels are "wizzles," and where I heard a mistress say to her maid, "That little dish wants to go down into the dairy."

A bright breezy morning saluted us as we trudged through the 'pull-over,'—the wagoners' term for gap

—and descended upon the sand which hereabouts is broad, firm, and smooth. Waynfleet being still in the mood to walk a mile or two farther, we paced onwards with that cheerful feeling which grows out of anticipations of travel and ability to walk. The sand-hills here rise to an elevation that justifies their name, and afford a good prospect over the thorpes that besprinkle the marshes. The prevalence of the Saxon and not the Danish word for village is noteworthy. In some of the old manuscripts villagers are called thorpsmen. About an hour brought us to Mablethorpe: one of the most frequented watering-places of Lincolnshire. Mount the thorny hill by the side of the gap, and you see a place which shows signs of growing into a little town; streets, rows, and terraces, with here and there a stylish-looking house, and the church in the rear with chancel roof overtopping the low square tower. And all beyond is green and flat, even to Alford, with which town, about eight miles distant, communication is maintained by omnibus. Judging from the present height of the sand-hills, there is not much danger of the fate that threatened the inhabitants in 1692, when, in a petition to the Court of Sewers, they represented "the towne of Mablethorpe as apparently in great danger of being swallowed up by the sea, and with very little or no defences to oppose the raging thereof."

Of course there are two or three bathing-machines, or 'caravans,' to use the local word; and boats; and flagstaves in conspicuous situations; and toys and trifles, and the inevitable photographer with his collection of black-a-moors. Waynfleet got into talk with the artist, and discovered that his term for diaphragms was 'dia-

grams.' He had pitched his studio near the long plank which is the only footpath that Mablethorpe has yet been able to contrive across the loose heavy sand of the gap. "Don't trouble yourself to open your pack; we don't want anything," said the mistress of a house to me as I unbuckled my knapsack to seek a card for a certain curate who happened not to be at home when I called.

On we walked again, and after a while struck one of the 'binks,' which offered a promising lead. But by and by we found ourselves separated from the main shore by a furlong or two of sludge, through which we had to wade to regain our route. It was the beginning of a change, for as you approach the great Yorkshire estuary, the coast becomes a repetition of that which borders the Wash: great breadths of slime and salt-marsh, traversed by belts of faggots to retain the mud, and passable only along the narrow margin at the outer base of the sand-hills. We climbed the hills once more, and saw Burgh; and Louth spire in the distance; and had a feast of 'brame-berries,' and got a glimpse of Saltfleet, and the mouth of the Humber.

Farther on we ascended to a firm road; crossed the haven by the clough, and so came to Saltfleet; a dull village on elevated ground, where the courtyard of the inn is overgrown with grass, and general stagnation appears to prevail. It was lively enough, no doubt, when Sir Thomas Fairfax landed here in September, 1643, coming from Hull to join his force with Cromwell's, and secure Lincolnshire for the Parliament.

The *New Inn*, where the only viands were eggs and bacon, echoed hollow and empty to our footfall, and

looked somewhat desolate. But we found in that grassy court-yard a spring of excellent water, which on a coast where good water is scarce gave us no little satisfaction.

Having no desire to see more of the saltmarsh, I resolved on continuing my walk by a road within the sea-wall. Waynfleet, who had now seen more of the coast of his native county than ever before, carried my knapsack for yet another mile; and then we parted: he for a two-days' journey homewards; I to get as far as I could on the way to Cleethorpes by eventide.

The road soon led me into rural scenes, where the only signs of the sea are occasional glimpses of a shaggy sand-hill or of the distant level of the sea-wall: where you meet bright red carts, or black carts with bright red wheels, and wagons which exhibit on their yellow front three oval shields bearing the name and address of the owner and maker: where the rick-thatch is kept from blowing away by a number of cords thrown across weighted at each end with a brick, and the stacks look curious with a row of bricks dangling on each side; and where rustic damsels shout to the loiterer of their party, "Naw then, ur ye coomin' hoam? ye silly-lookin' mawkin."

So to North Somercotes, where "ye want to goo by that guide-post, and thruff the ma'shes by the fut-road," informed me at once as to the route to Grainthorpe, and as to a way of pronouncing *through* which I had never before heard. "Thruff the ma'shes," for through the marshes, might make one fancy that Anglo-Saxon churls are not yet extinct.

From Grainthorpe onwards my view was spoiled

by heavy driving rain, which made the landscape look very dreary, and prepared me to appreciate the kitchen fire of the *Crown and Anchor* at Tetney Lock, where I arrived wet and cold an hour before sunset. The house is one of half a dozen situate a mile from the haven on the canal by which Louth communicates with the sea, and is frequented by boatmen and rustics, in whose talk a curious stranger will discover evidence of nearness to Yorkshire, and somewhat of local peculiarity. To lie is to lig: "She 'll lig there a month," said a tough old fellow, speaking of his boat, "now that I hev hugged all the coal mysen;" meaning that he had carried it ashore on his own back. A rustic urged to finish some task which he had undertaken, answered, "I wean't say I wean't do 't; but I wean't do 't wi'out he peh me. I wrought for he afore: fillin' an' spreedin'; and done it by odds and bobs."

"Aw thowt aw know'd ye," said another. "Ha' ye gotten yer herse? 'T was that made me ax ye what mon ye wuz."

"To be soor," answered the one whose horse was in question; but what he was sure of did not appear.

"Missus! I want that putting down," said another as he handed his pint pot to the hostess.

"What 's thot mon's neäm az called here isterday?"

"What 's his neäm? Aw weän't tell'ee, 'cause aw dunno. He wuz axin for taters."

"We must keep the taters to oursen."

The country hereabouts is parcelled into numerous small holdings, and population is pretty thickly sprinkled, and cottages extend so far along the road,

that it is not easy to tell where one village ends and the other begins. Some of the company boasted that the best feeding land in all Lincolnshire lay between Saltfleet and Grimsby. One knew a labourer who had bought two acres "for a hundred and forty pound. He wheeäted one acre and tatied the t' other; and got a thousand pecks o' taters and eight quarter o' wheeät the fust 'ear." Another had paid £70 for three roods of land, and got eight hundred pecks of potatoes for his first crop, which, kept on hand till March, sold then at fifteen-pence a peck. Another of the party knew men about Somercotes "as growed onions, and made 'em pay wonderful." The best land will fetch £100 an acre. It gladdened me to hear how the party warmed with their talk, and to observe how thoroughly they appreciated the advantage of living in a district where "a man could do some good for hisself with a bit o' land, and happen pay for moor 'n half on 't with his fust 'ear's crop." The good old times when every rood of ground maintained its man, could hardly have been better. "They wuzzent so good," answered one of the men to whom I addressed the remark, "'t wuzzent so easy to get 'ur crops to markut in them owd times. There wuzzent no railway 'ithin four or five mile on us uz there is now."

Tetney Lock is two miles from a church. "At winter time," said the hostess, "a clergyman comes here and preaches in the watch-house."

What a delightful morning saluted me when I looked forth on the morrow; and what a sense of freedom there was in the broad pastures across which runs the footway

to Cleethorpes! How delightfully fresh and green the grass looked after the rain; and the air had that quickening influence which makes a wayfarer sing. With leagues of 'feeding land' far outspread, on which, sheep and cattle apart, nothing appears but a stripe of hedgerow, a shepherd's shed and three trees, there was full play for the sense of freedom. On I walked, crossing from pasture to pasture by the foot-bridges, while the tops of white sails appearing above the level bank a mile or two distant on the right, showed that I was not far from the northern limit of my journey.

I have often felt surprised when wandering in lonely places, which seemed but little known even to dwellers in the immediate neighbourhood, by meeting a party of Irish reapers tramping the shortest way to their destination, and disturbing the solitude by their loud voices. Deep among the wilds of the northern hills, where cultivation has not yet come; in the little-frequented lanes of the west, on the quiet footpaths of remote parishes in the grain-growing Midland, there have I fallen in with the hardy Celts, and never failed to find them civil and good-humoured. And here I met them on the flat lands of the east, on their way to reap the Saxon's grain. "How is it that you always know the short cuts?" I asked. "Sure, your honour," answered one with a grin, "there 's bhoys in Ireland that have thravelled this way, and they tell us."

From the broad pastures the path led me to the bank, whence I looked full upon the mighty Humber. There, far across the green expanse, I saw the tall red lighthouse of the Spurn; the distant lightship; the low wooded shores of Holderness, and all that interesting

region where, six years ago you and I, active reader, began our *Month in Yorkshire*. My thought went back to the pleasant morning on which I set out from Patrington to walk to the lonely lighthouse, glad at heart with expectations of travel-enjoyments that were fully realized; and the same gladness still animated me on the tamer shore of the heaving estuary, and I could almost fancy that the same morning had returned, for the sun was as bright, the breeze as lively, and old Humber as playful with sparkling ripples as in that former holiday-time. Even as the face of a friend inspires pleasurable emotions after years of absence, so does the sight of Nature's well-remembered features.

Here, between the bank and the broad saltmarsh, I saw patches of sea-holly. I had looked for the plant in all our journey from the Wash, but noticed only one solitary example of it near Saltfleet. It grows abundantly along the Yorkshire coast, while the sea-thorn appears to prefer Lincolnshire.

A little farther and there Cleethorpes opens in the view; red houses and a windmill crowning a bluff that seems to be the termination of a branch ridge running from the wolds to the Humber. Of this situation the growing village is not a little proud, for of all the Lincolnshire watering-places it alone can boast of a cliff. From this modest elevation, which, as may be inferred from the term *clee*, is composed mostly of clay, the visitors who use it as their chief resort and lounging-place can overlook the beach, and the breezy common; the strollers and donkeys; the cocklers; bathing-machines, and all that sails the water between the two shores. Trips to the Spurn, seven miles distant, are

among its recreations for adventurous boating-parties.

From Cleethorpes it is about an hour's walk along the beach to Grimsby, where the tall tower of the docks rises conspicuously against the sky. The way is toilsome, and the neighbourhood of the town so unprepossessing that you will pity the troops of excursionists who are attracted thither by low fares, seductive advertisements, and hopes of a view of the sea. The long dull walk from the railway station is enough to dishearten even the sanguine; but if that should fail, their first prospect of the beach will at once lower their tone. But there are loud noises near the docks and other signs of trade, and if you are curious to know who is the principal customer you may infer it from the number of German sailors who saunter about, or congregate where the *Hamburg Borsenhalle* is 'taken in.'

Grass grows in some of the old streets, and it may be that their aspect will remind you of the old tradition concerning Grim the fisherman, who founded the town—hence Grim's-by; and who picked up Havelok the Dane at sea, and was at last buried in the parish church. Havelok Street and a "great blew boundary-stone," known as the Havelok stone, are still discoverable, and the town seal bearing the boy and his rescuer supports the tradition.

An old author tells the tale with particulars. "Grime," he writes, "a poore fisherman, as he was launching into y^e^ river for fish in his little boate upon the Humber, espyed not far from him another little boate empty (as he might conceave), which by y^e^ fauour of y^e^ wynde and tyde, still approached nearer

and nearer unto him. He betakes him to his oares, and meets itt, wherein he founde onely a childe wrapt in swathing clothes, purposely exposed (as it should seeme) to y^e^ pittyless rage of y^e^ wilde and wide ocean. He, moued with pitty, takes itt home, and like a good foster-father carefully nourisht itt, and endeavoured to nourish it in his owne occupation: but y^e^ childe contrarily was wholy devoted to exercises of activity, and when he began to write man, to martiall sports, and at length by his signall valour obteyned such renowne, y^t^ he marryed y^e^ King of England's daughter, and last of all founde who was his true father, and that he was sonne to y^e^ King of Denmark."

Much has been written by antiquaries on this tradition concerning Havelok the Dane: a personage as popular in Denmark as Robin Hood is in England. But, as usual, their conclusions are not easy to reconcile. Dr Latham, one of the latest who has treated of the subject, assigns it a place among legends, in contradistinction to traditions. He regards Higelac and Havelok as identical, and of Norse origin;—he discovers the hero under yet another name in Curan of the ballad, a Danish prince, who for love of the fair Argentile served in her uncle's kitchen as scullion, and won her at length,

> "And of Northumberland was king,
> Long reigning in renowne."

The market-place was thronged with country-folk, who amid their buying and selling found time to listen to the noisy babble of rival Cheap Jacks, and to Professor Gammon, Q.D., quack-doctor, from Hull,

who stood on a chair to hold forth, and exhibited wonderful physiological diagrams in proof of his arguments. How the rustics stared and opened their mouths! and how greatly did they admire when a poor labourer coming up interrupted the professor in the midst of his oration with, "Here, sir, here 's the fifteenpence-halfpenny that I owes you for the physic you give me for my wife. It done her a world o' good." And much more did they admire while the orator loudly praised the poor man as one whom his betters might take example by, and promised the next time his wife was ill to "give him medicine to cure her for nothing, as a reward for his honesty." Of course no one could refuse to buy pills and draughts of so very kind-hearted a doctor, and an immediate demand arose for little packets, "three-pence each or five-pence for two," and for phials filled with a crimson fluid; and one broad-shouldered yeoman, after speaking a few words in an undertone to the doctor, walked off with him to "his office" for a private consultation.

"It wean't tak' me long to sell hafe a dozen aelters," said one of the noisy auctioneers; but he had to make an uproar about his half-dozen halters for eighteen minutes, before a customer took them at threepence-halfpenny each.

While all this was going on I made an attempt to classify the faces, and found three marked differences of form and feature. There was the angular yellow face with hollow cheeks and high cheek-bones, of which you see many examples in the villages of Lindsey; and the round flat face as red as beef which makes up

in colour what it lacks in intelligence; and the long pyramidal face, somewhat sharp above but broad below, with a big mouth and full chin, sallow in complexion, yet wearing on the whole a sort of jolly expression. The rows of full-cheeked damsels who sat watching the baskets of eggs, butter, and poultry in the market-hall seemed at first to constitute a fourth class; but it was possible by a little observation to distinguish the three varieties into which they would fall when time should have lessened their plumpness. Listen to the talk of these damsels and you will hear them say "yis," and "not yit," "you knaw," "soor" for sure, and "perfectness;" while in the adjoining division of the hall their fathers are bargaining for o-äts" and "whe-ät;" or arguing about the "gainest way" to a neighbouring village.

Among the names in lists on the church door I noticed Babb, Dabb, Poxon, Urry, Broddel, and Gooseman, and I tried to identify the owners when I went back into the market-place. There was another name—Frederick Tennyson—which reminded me that more than one poet was born at Somersby.

On one of the tombstones in the churchyard you may read an epitaph on a watchmaker:

> Here lies one who strove to equal Time!
> A task too hard, each power too sublime,
> Time stopt his motion, o'erthrew his balance wheel,
> Wore off his pivots, though made of harden'd steel;
> Broke all his springs, the verge of life decay'd,
> And now he is as though he'd ne'er been made,
> Not for the want of oiling—that he tried;
> If that had done—why then he ne'er had died.

An hour's journey by railway in the middle of the afternoon brought me to Thornton Abbey in a district where the white chalky roads almost dazzle the eye under hot sunshine. Looking eastward from the little station you see, within a five-minutes' walk, an old tower rising among trees. You cross a bit of common; pass the entrance, and find yourself between arcaded walls of dark red brick looking up at a noble gate-way which rises high before you, flanked by towers and crowned by turrets. It has niches and statues; is beautified by thick masses of ivy; and is interesting as being one of the buildings which show the transition from the Decorated style to the Perpendicular. You may ramble hither and thither under the trees or into the adjacent park, or mount the old stair, and pace the grim chamber above the arch, or the galleries, or look forth from the roof upon a quiet landscape, in which at a short distance are the remains of the abbey church and chapter house, and the abbot's lodging, transformed into a farmhouse with one old room remaining.

I travelled on to the ferry at New Holland by an evening train, and crossed over to Hull by one of the railway steam ferry-boats: large and commodious vessels which maintain the traffic across the Humber; and I slept on the Yorkshire side of the estuary for convenience of an early start on the morrow.

CHAPTER III.

A Windy Voyage — Barton — Hessle — Ferriby.— Trent and Ouse — Adlingfleet—Isle of Axholme—Once drowned now drained—Foreign Settlers—A Flood—Hang the Dutchman—Coarse Food—Bad Travelling—Keadby—Althorpe—West Butterwick—Breakfast and Gossip—Ware Oegre—The four Rivers—Stripes of Tillage—Fertile Landscape—Epworth Church—The Rector's Tomb—Traditionary Footprints—A noble Lesson—The Rector's Jest—Wide Prospect—Hatfield Chace — Small Estates — A self-handed Set—Keen after the Land—Methodists—Ironmonger and Barber—Vegetative Chequers—Haxey—Wroot: out of England—Comfortable Pedler—Experimental Gipseys — Stockwith — Trent Bank—Oil Mills—Gainsborough—The Old Hall and John Wesley.

Of all that windy summer the next day was the most windy. Old Humber proved himself worthy of his ancient fame, and tossed the *Isle of Axholme* steamer about as if she were but a canoe; dashed his foam along the deck, and made some of the passengers sea-sick, and drenched and alarmed those who were rowed to the landing-places. It was a fine sight to see the grand estuary in such commotion. Barges descending from the interior rushed through the water with a speed that seemed to mock the ascending steamer.

We passed Barton, whence the ferry of the great North road used formerly to cross to Hull; then Hessle and the pleasant uplands in its rear; then

Ferriby, and on the opposite shore Ferriby Sluice, where one of the low-lying districts of Lincolnshire pours out its drainage; then Winteringham, where the land begins to rise; and about twenty miles above Hull we came to the confluence known locally as 'Trent fall,' where Trent after a course of two hundred miles flows into the Ouse.

The Yorkshire stream is the broader of the two; but they are both great rivers and worthy of the two largest counties of England. The right bank rises into hills, which terminate boldly on the stream, in striking contrast to the low flat of the left bank. Adlingfleet in that low flat is said to be the place where Edgar Atheling, King Harold's heir, lay with his fleet when waiting for a chance to recover lands from the Normans.

Here the Trent flows between the main-land of Lincolnshire and the Isle of Axholme, a place which Nature and history have made remarkable. It was a refuge of the Coritani until the Romans burnt down the forests, occasioning thereby such a stoppage of the streams by fallen trees that nearly the whole Isle was converted into bog and fen. A local name—Osterfield—still preserves, as is said, a trace of the subjugation and of the name of Ostorius, the captain whose exploits occupied our thoughts during our ramble in the valley of the Teme, at the opposite extremity of the kingdom of Mercia. In the days of the Confessor, the Isle was thickly overgrown with brush, amid which lay fine fertile glades, and maintained a numerous population; a description which can have been applicable to the uplands only, for the low districts were nearly

always under water, so that boats laden with corn could be rowed anywhere at pleasure.

Among the lords of this half-drowned country we find Roger de Mowbray, who, after taking part in a rebellion against Henry II., founded Byland Abbey: one of the picturesque ruins of Yorkshire. He was taken prisoner by Saladin, and died in the East. Another of the family, Thomas de Mowbray, is he whom Shakespeare sets before us in the lists at Coventry ready to do battle with "lying Bolingbroke." In later years refugee Protestants from France and the Netherlands settled in Axholme and brought with them a knowledge of culture and drainage which was usefully applied. With what need may be inferred from a letter written in September, 1630, by Richard Brydges of Sykehouse to Lord Wentworth, wherein describing that while on a journey to visit a poor tenant when standing crops were all flooded and stacks floating away, "I did see," he says, "mothers Pyrrha-like, trudging middle-deep in water, with theire infants hanginge upon their breastes; and the fathers, Deucalion-like, bearing theire children upon theire shoulders, to seek higher ground for theire succour. All sorts of people in pietifull distresse; some to save theire lives, some theire goods and cattle, some to get food for theire hungry bodies."

"Under water, famine; under snow, bread," is a proverb which brought but little comfort to the fugitives. And yet these same people violently opposed Vermuyden's project for drainage; they were not to be defrauded of their rights by the "vanity of a new nothing;" rather let the Dutchman be hanged; and they set fire to the overseer's house, hoping to burn

him and all his family. Even at the beginning of the present century the islanders were rude and boorish, retaining the characteristics of the Girvii; the ancient fen-dwellers. Their bread was made of coarse flour and ground horse-beans. And such was the difficulty of travelling across the lowlands that numbers of the people never left home between the times of the October mart and the Easter mart at Gainsborough. About 1811, rough Yorkshire flagstones were laid down as causeways from place to place, after the manner of the West Riding, and in time the soft thoroughfares were changed into hard roads. But with all this the fatness of the soil is such that the Isle sticks heavily to a walker's feet in rainy weather.

At Keadby the steamer stops to land passengers who take the railway to Doncaster and Sheffield. Mentioning the latter town reminds me that I visited it a third time as a starting-point for a walk to the Peak, during one of the holidays included in this narrative, and that I found it just as detestable as ever. A little higher and the handsome church-tower of Althorpe appeared rising high on the left bank; then we met the *Atalanta*, one of the two steamers which trade daily between Gainsborough and Hull. Steamers were first put upon the river in 1814. Before that date the trip by sailing vessels took from two to three days, and sometimes a week.

Half an hour before noon I landed at West Butterwick with a good appetite for breakfast. The Sheffields were once lords of this place. One of them built a stately tower here; another was one of Queen Elizabeth's captains, and did good service against the Ar-

mada; and another was with the fleet that fought De Ruyter so stoutly in Solebay.

The hostess of the *Red Lion* set before me beef and mutton, cheese, salad and pickle, tea, bread, butter, and currant cakes, and charged but a shilling for the abundant repast. "Would I take it amiss," she asked, "if she came in now and then for a word or two of talk? 'T was such a pleasure to have a bit o' talk with somebody fresh." Taking it amiss was out of the question, so she came in half a dozen times during my breakfast and talked till customers or the maid called her out. While talking about the church she explained "when there 's to be a service at ten the bell rings at eight; but if not while three the bell do'n't ring while twelve."

In common with some other estuaries the Humber has a 'bore,' here called the oegre, and it excites no little commotion among the river craft when rushing up the confined channel of the Trent. "'Ware oegre," is then the cry; and all the little vessels are moored so as to meet the shock without capsizing. At night, when all else is still, the noise of the great wave sounds very solemn along the winding vale.

On starting for a walk to the heart of the Isle we will remember that it is insulated by four rivers—the Trent, Don, Thorn, and Idle; and is about twenty miles long and from six to nine miles broad. Some of its peculiarities become apparent before you have walked a mile from Butterwick. The land is good; the crops look rich; and the fields are subdivided into narrow stripes which remind you of one of the familiar aspects of rural France. The footpath into which I turned,

about a mile from the village, crossed stripes of wheat, potatoes, turnips, and wurzels, or "wuzzels," as the rustics say. The potato-ridges, formed so as to resemble broad squared beams lying side by side, were a novelty to me. Presently, by the path ascending a gentle slope, there was a view over a broad landscape: pale blue uplands beyond the river, and all the hither side overspread with pasture and tillage, and with enough of wood for warmth and diversity, among which a few poplars here and there mark the site of a homestead. And from all the landscape there went up a mighty roar; for the boisterous wind swept hoarsely through the corn and shocks, and seemed as if it would strip every branch from the trees.

There is something French, too, in the difference between the high-roads and the by-roads. The latter, though with flagged footways, still justify in a measure the proverbs—"Bon pays, mauvais chemin," and "The worse for the rider, the better for the bider." One of the earliest highways in the Isle was a corduroy road constructed of trees dug out of the adjacent bogs. In one place six hundred trees were dug from ten acres of bog. These bogs supplied abundance of peat to the surrounding country. York drew its supplies of peat fuel from them during the civil war until Axholme was captured by the Parliament.

The by-way emerges upon a good road at the foot of a bold slope, on the top of which, overlooking an expanse of open fields, stands the parish church of Epworth, pleasantly surrounded by trees. It would not be time misspent, I had thought, to visit John Wesley's birth-place; and had there been nothing be-

sides the prospect that opens from the summit of the ridge, the recompense was ample.

The churchyard is crowded with graves and tombs, among which, near the chancel door, you may discover a large flat slab that commemorates the name of Samuel Wesley, who was rector of Epworth for thirty-nine years, and "as he lived so he died in the true catholic faith of the holy Trinity in unity," and who was the father of the first Methodist. On the blank portion of the stone below the inscription are two groups of small irregular impressions about twenty inches apart, which look scorched and rusty. Examine them curiously, for the tradition has not yet died out that John Wesley once stood barefoot to preach on his father's tomb, and grew into such a fervour that his toes burnt hollows in the very substance of the stone. This tradition may perhaps be acceptable to that somewhat numerous class who are willing to believe in a saint of the nineteenth century. A certain Quaker in Hull, who walked with me past the Gothic front of the new Wesleyan chapel there, said he could see no reason for the canopied niche unless to receive some day a statue of Saint John of Epworth.

If any man be discontented, let him read what the old rector did during his thirty-nine years of life and labour at Epworth,—how bravely his wife, a queen among women, did her part in loving endeavour and endurance,—how resolutely their son set himself to the mighty work of teaching ignorance the most brutal, and of enlightening consciences the most darkened, and it may be his discontent will stand rebuked thereby. Fathers, mothers, and children may all learn a

noble lesson from the history of what befell in that old rectory which long since fell a prey to the flames. The pulpit where old Samuel preached still remains; and while looking up at it I remembered how that he had once made it the scene of a jest, as well as of sermons, at the expense of the clerk.

"Like to an owl in ivy-bush,"

gave out the rector, followed immediately by the poor little clerk, who, half-buried in a cast-off full-bottomed wig, recited the second line—

"That rueful thing am I."

The church shows but little of remarkable:—a deformed chancel arch; the pulpit in its old place, and an organ. The singing used to be good, "but is not good now," said my informant, "because the singers have took to quarrelling."

By a narrow awkward passage from the organ loft I got out on the roof. The extent of the prospect may be imagined from the fact that in very clear weather Beverly and York, Doncaster, Sheffield, and Lincoln can be seen. On one side I could survey many a broad league of the vale of Trent; on the other the great level expanse of Hatfield Chace, and across it to the church spire of Laughton-en-le-Morthen: Lighten in the Morning, as it is called by Sheffield folk who sometimes get a glimpse of it through their smoke. In that Chace armies have fought: there fell Edwin of Northumbria and one of his sons before the savage Penda; nine years later the same sword struck down Oswald, whose

name is kept alive by the so-called Saxon church at Crowle dedicated to his memory. John Baliol, during his sojourn at Wheatley in Nottinghamshire, amused himself by hunting in the Chace: Prince Henry there with a party drove deer into the water. And there Vermuyden and other adventurers carried on drainage works; and four thousand acres of quaking bog were converted into corn-fields, by spreading over them the warp or muddy deposit dug from an old river-bed; and warping, that is, letting in the water of the Humber to throw down its suspended mud, has been charged fifteen pounds an acre, and with profit to the payer, for the land so treated would afterwards grow wheat and beans for a dozen years without manure.

From the foot of the ridge to the extremity of the Isle a succession of small holdings meets your eye. Even before the Reform Bill passed there were in Axholme, out of a population of 12,000, one thousand entitled to vote for the county. What a contrast they present to the small proprietors of Ireland, who, however fertile their soil, cultivate it apparently to no other purpose than poverty. "They 're a self-handed set," said a man of Epworth in describing them to me; "they do n't care much for edication, but they ain't drinkers. They can take their pint or two o' ale, you know; but that ain't drinkin'. Yes, sir, they 're keen after the land. I 've known a farm o' two hundred acres cut up and sold or rented in small lots. Years agoo the rent was two pound a acre: then sence I can remember it got up to two pound ten; then to three pound, and everybody said 't would be impossible to get their money again. But it 's gone higher, sir, and

I know labourers as are willin' to pay five pound or five pound ten for their year's rent. A good many buys small bits, a rood or so, right out; but whether they buys or rents they 're always tryin' to get more."

One of Duchess Katherine's letters to John Paston was "wretyn at Eppeworth:" she little dreaming it would become a place of note in social and religious history. Methodists are now numerous in the town, more numerous than any other sect, and their chapel is large in proportion. Alexander Kilham, founder of the Primitive Methodists, and a native of Epworth, is kept in memory by another chapel newly built, in a style meant perhaps for Lombard-Gothic. No church-rates are paid; but the parishioners did not object to contribute towards the cost of enlarging the churchyard. The townsfolk are perhaps self-handed as well as the countryfolk. The place nevertheless looks respectable; it has a market-cross standing where three ways meet, and among its shopkeepers one whose sign describes him as IRONMONGER *and* BARBER. He told me there came "a deal of folk to the town on market-days; but trade was not so good as it used to be since the steamers took to running from Gainsborough to Hull."

Late in the afternoon I started for another walk of twelve miles. There was presently another ridge to ascend, and on looking back from the top, I saw how strikingly the slopes were cut up into stripes: in some places different tints of green, in others alternated with yellow. "There 's nobbut whee-ät on them places," said a passing rustic, who informed me further that "there was a very deal o' wind about." The wind-

mills worked as if they enjoyed it: and indeed it "blew hard enough to winner taters," as a windmiller in Warwickshire once said to a friend of mine.

The road crosses more ridges and passes Haxey, a village with a good church, and a few rare old books in the library thereof. The name is said to be derived from *Haxa*—a witch. It seems but fitting to have traces of witchcraft in an Isle which shows giants' graves at High Melwood. Wroot, a village down in the flats about an hour's walk to the west, is a name which signifies *out of England;* so says at least the local historian, explaining that the village was so environed by fens as to be at one time scarcely accessible.

Beyond Haxey the road is bordered by hedge-rows, and shaded by tall ash trees and elms, and is intersected by remarkably deep drains. Farther on I saw a pedler, who told me "he meant to make himself comfortable as long as he lived," and exemplified his meaning in a satisfactory way, for there he sat on the grassy margin of the road, with a kettle singing merrily by his side, a large can of tea before him, with bread in proportion. "He did n't mind making his pack bigger by carrying them things about; the cup o' tea more than made up for that trouble." I know a clergyman and an author who once crossed England from east to west trying in their way for a similar result. They went as gipseys, but on wheels, and encamped wherever they could; but succeeded less well than the pedler.

I came to Stockwith, a village situate in a corner of Nottinghamshire, by the mouth of the Idle, and

there crossed by the ferry to the right bank of the Trent. Thence the path follows the course of the river; a pleasant walk along a high bank, from which you can see the reaches of the stream, and look into pastures, and teeming orchards, and upon the maze of weeds and huge dock leaves that mask the slopes of the bank. Here and there boat-builders ply their trade; and oil mills are busy crushing the 'line' that grows so plentifully on Axholme. This is not a new business in Lincolnshire, for the Bostonian quoted in a former chapter says there were in his day "oyl-mills going with sails" which made oil from cole-seed. After squeezing out the oil, he adds, "the remainder is called cakes, which here they heat ovens with and burn for fewel. We export them to Holland, where they feed their kine with them."

At length Gainsborough appears in sight: the chief port of the Trent, proud of its association with incidents in the life of King Alfred, of having been a port earlier than Hull; yet economically disposed withal, as the distich implies—

> "Poor Gainsburgh, proud people
> Built a new church to an old steeple."

I finished the evening with a stroll, reviving my recollections of former visits to the town: of the Old Hall which dates from the reign of Stephen, presents a gabled and thickly-timbered front to the Mart Square, and is supposed to have been at one time a residence of John of Gaunt's. In later times it belonged to the Hickmans, among whom was the Antony Hickman mentioned by Hakluyt in his *Voyages*. Another was

Sir Willoughby Hickman, a loyal friend to Charles I.; and John Wesley, under date August 2nd, 1759, mentions that he then first preached at Gainsborough "in Sir Nevil Hickman's great Hall. It is full as large as the Weaver's Hall in Bristol. At 2 it was filled with a rude wild multitude (a few of a better spirit excepted). Yet all but 2 or 3 gentlemen were attentive while I enforced our Lord's words: 'What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' I was walking back through a gaping, staring crowd, when Sir Nevil came and thanked me for my sermon, to the no small amazement of his neighbours, who shrunk back as if they had seen a ghost." In June, 1786, the zealous apostle preached here once more to a large congregation in Sir Nevil Hickman's yard, and he records somewhat mournfully, "but Sir Nevil is no more, and has left no son, so the very name of that ancient family is lost! And how changed is the house, since I was young, and good Sir Willoughby Hickman lived here! One of the towers is said to have been built in the reign of King Stephen, above six hundred years ago."

CHAPTER IV.

Railway again—View into Nottinghamshire—Flying Notes—The Fossdyke—Saxilby—Lincoln—Was, is, and shall be—The Bridge—The Stone Bow—The Strait—Steep Hill—The Jews' House—Sweet Sir Hugh—The Bail—Castle and Prison—Ermine Street—Newport Gate—Stukeley's Description—Lindum Colonia—Fragments of Walls—Pleasure for Mind and Eye—The Mint Wall—St Paul's—The first Church—Glimpses of History—Giraldus Cambrensis—Bishop Grossetete and the Friar—Exchequer Gate—View of the Cathedral—Imposing Effect—Diabolic Overlooker—Exuberant Architecture—Fascinations of Sculpture—Roman Relics—Great Tom—A Vast Prospect—Robin Hood's Country—The Witham—The Poet's Description—The Minster Yard—Below-hill—Old Churches—The Conduit—John of Gaunt's Palace—New and Old Lincoln.

On the morrow I took the earliest train for Lincoln. The railway-station is on a hill, which includes in its range the battle-field where Cromwell defeated and slew Cavendish, and made himself master of Gainsborough: the Charles Candish of Waller's epitaph.

From the top of St Helen's church-tower, on the same heights, you can see the limestone hills of Yorkshire; the dark moors of Sheffield, and the forest heights of Nottinghamshire. As the train speeds onwards we look into the vale of Trent on our right, and observing the names of its numerous villages on the map may perchance remember that Knaith was the

birth-place of Thomas Sutton, founder of the Charter House; that Littleborough was the Roman Segelocum, and Brampton the residence of Babington, one of those "*generosi adolescentuli*" who fell victims to their sympathy for the Queen of Scots. Beyond lies Torksey, with its castle in ruins, where King Sweyn moored his fleet, and established head-quarters for his marauding Danes; and where the Trent is united with the Witham by the Fossdyke, the Roman canal which Henry the Third cleared out to restore the navigation between Lincoln and Hull. Farther on is Kettlethorpe, the seat of old Sir Hugh Swynford, whose widow, Chaucer's sister, was taken to wife by John of Gaunt, and died Duchess of Lancaster.

The undulating landscape, after a few miles, sinks down into marshy-looking levels. Then, having passed Saxilby, we see conspicuous on their lofty hill the towers of the cathedral: a noble landmark for miles around. And when the nearer view opens, and you see how houses, churches, public buildings, gardens and trees cling one above another on the hill-side to the very summit, where they are over-topped by the tall minster towers, you feel, notwithstanding the proverb, "the devil looks over Lincoln," that the city will enliven your search for antiquity with touches of the picturesque.

I walked up the street looking for an hotel, speculating as to the reception a man with a knapsack was likely to meet with in a provincial metropolis, where pedestrian travellers are an unfamiliar sight. *The Queen,* however, seemed as willing to entertain me as I was to eat my breakfast; and this was no sooner

over than I set out to explore. It was my third visit to the city, so I knew whither to direct my steps.

> "Lincoln was, London is, and York shall be
> The fairest city of the three,"

runs the distich, reminding us of the time when the chief towns of our two largest counties could pretend to rival the ambitious city on the Thames. The prophet was perhaps a Yorkshireman. Lincoln has, however, much in common with its sister city north of the Humber, in its memorials of Roman, Saxon, and Norman. "It is," says a traveller of one hundred and twenty years ago, "so full of the ruins of monasteries and religious houses, that the very barns, stables, outhouses, and, as they showed me, some of the very hog-styes, are built church-fashion; that is to say, with stone walls, and arch'd windows and doors. Here are thirteen churches, but the meanest to look on that are anywhere to be seen." Perhaps Arthur Young cared little for these things, for he remarks—"I know of nothing at Lincoln worth a stranger's attention, but the Minster, which is a very fine building; it is remarkably light, and the ornaments very neat, and well executed. It is a more pleasing edifice, and of better proportions, than that at York."

Let us mount the hill and judge for ourselves. We have not to go far from the railway-stations to find something old—the bridge over the Witham; but to discover the antiquity you must descend to the brink of the stream, and look under the arches. Then you see a range of chamfered ribs, such as Norman masons loved to shape, changing their direction from

transverse to diagonal on the eastern side, where greater strength was required to support the chantry chapel built by King John. A little farther, and there is the picturesque Stone-bow—the Temple Bar of Lincoln—a Tudor arch which, supporting the Guildhall, with statues in niches and heavy mullioned windows, bestrides the roadway, flanked by turrets, wings, and posterns. Local antiquaries tell us that some part of the basement dates from the time of Cœur de Lion, but the upper story from the sixteenth century.

The street beyond looks respectable, and sufficiently active for a county town of twenty-one thousand inhabitants. At its upper end the acclivity becomes rapid; and among the houses are some of venerable aspect with overhanging upper stories topped by a gable, and here and there a carved corbel, or a doorway set within a double-looped cable moulding. Among such relics the candid notification TAP AND DRAM SHOP, which occurs more than once, seems out of place. Still ascending we pass through the *Strait*, and enter *Steep Hill*, rightly so named, for the street hereabouts is perhaps the steepest in the kingdom. To walk down it with leisurely dignity is hardly possible, even by a clergyman, and it will make you smile to see how some folk descend. But slowness of ascent favours observation; and the Jews' House on our left is worth a little delay. It has a fine round-headed doorway, above which a projection, running up to the eaves, shows the position of the chimney; a peculiarity of Norman domestic architecture. Pass through the court to the rear, and you will see signs of age which seem coeval with that old ribbed arch reflected in the Witham.

The house is so named because it was once occupied by an unlucky Jewess, who, so runs the story, was sent to the gallows for clipping the King's coin. The hanging of a Jew in those days was not unfrequently a profitable transaction to certain of the survivors. And was it not here that a number of Jews, accused of stealing and crucifying a Christian child, "yonge Hew of Lincoln," as Chaucer calls him, were tortured to death, or hanged on the southern hill, in 1255? The tradition still lives in the old ballad:

"A' the boys of merry Lincoln
Were playing at the ba',
And up it stands him sweet Sir Hugh,
The flower among them a'.

"He kick'd the ba' there wi' his foot,
And keppit it wi' his knee,
Till even in at the Jew's window
He gart the bonny ba' flee."

How that the little boy was "wyled" into the house by the Jew's daughter, and there slain, and cast into a deep well, and the murder miraculously discovered, is well known to readers of old ballads:

"And a' the bells of merry Lincoln
Without men's hands were rung;
And a' the books o' merry Lincoln
Were read without men's tongue:
Never was such a burial
Sin' Adam's days begun."

A little higher and we are in the *Bail*, the ballium of olden time, being the district dependent on the castle. Remembering that William the Norman began

to build a fortress here in the second year after the Conquest, you will look upon the gate-tower with its grand arch as a fitting entrance. "May I come in?" I asked of the big woman who answered my knock. "Yes, you may come in, but you can't see the prison." I did not want to see the prison, being desirous only to walk round the courtyard, which is made pleasant by grass and trees. The castle is now a gaol; and the mound on which yet stands the old octagonal wall of the keep, touched with ivy, is a burial-place for prisoners. Besides this there is something interesting to look at: an oriel window facing the porter's lodge, which is so graceful with its corbels representing human figures, its mouldings and finials, that it will perhaps strike you with lively surprise. It was brought from John of Gaunt's palace in the low town, and reconstructed here as in a safe place, at the cost of a gentleman who, as the portress says, "gev fifty pound for the old thing."

Leaving the cathedral for the present, we continue our walk northwards along the highway of an earlier conqueror — the ancient Ermine Street—to Newport Gate, which some antiquaries regard as the most interesting Roman relic in the kingdom. It was built by Claudius more than eighteen hundred years ago, of stones rudely shaped and piled; yet still as of old it spans the ancient highway. He must be phlegmatic indeed who can regard it without emotion; who as he walks to and fro beneath, viewing it from side to side and imagining the scenes which that old arch has witnessed, feels no quickening of his sense of awe and wonder! Let us read Stukeley's description writ-

ten about one hundred and forty years since:—"The northern, called Newport Gate," he says, "is the noblest remnant of this sort in Britain, as far as I know. Upon the first sight of it I was struck with admiration, as well of its noble simplicity, as that hitherto it should not have been taken notice of. 'T is a vast semicircle of stones of very large dimensions, and by what I could perceive laid without mortar, connected only by the cuneiform shape. This magnificent arch is sixteen foot diameter, the stones four foot thick at bottom. From the injuries of time, but worse of hands, it is somewhat luxated, yet seems to have a joint in the middle, not a keystone. On both sides towards the upper part are laid horizontal stones of great dimensions, some ten or twelve foot long, to take off the side pressure, very judiciously adapted. This arch rises from an impost of large mouldings, some part of which, especially on the left-hand side, are still discoverable. Below on both sides was a postern, or foot-passage, made of like stones; but against that on the left side is a house built, and when I went down into the cellar I found a chimney set before it. The ground here in the street has been very much raised, and the top of the wall is of a later workmanship. 'T is indeed a most venerable piece of antiquity, and what a lover of architecture would be hugely delighted withal. They that look upon a gate among the vestiges of the Forum of Nerva at Rome, will think they see the counterpart of this; but of the two, this has the most grandeur in aspect."

In main particulars this description still applies: the difference in the upper and lower masonry is still

perceptible; the postern on the left side is still masked by the house; the raising of the ground of the roadway is still obvious; but there are a few new stones inserted in the right pier, and the joints of the great stones that form the arch have been stopped with mortar, whereby an unpleasing patchy effect is produced. Nevertheless, while gazing on it, "we hear the voice of years that are gone," and may imagine we see the legions marching along Ermine Street across the bleak table-land with their eagles, and entering their fortified city, *Lindum Colonia*, whose name still exists shortened into Lincoln.

Ramble about the neighbourhood of the gate and you will find fragments of the old Roman city wall. One of the largest is in a meadow about a stone's throw to the east. It is a specimen of rubble work stripped of the facing stones, about thirty feet long and ten feet in thickness and height, the stones being laid at an angle below, and in horizontal courses above, and consolidated with grout or cement. It has no layer or bond of tile, in which particular it differs from the fragments that remain on the west of the gate. On the outer side towards the road, the ditch and vallum are distinctly traceable; and as the whole is inclosed by a fence of iron and furze we may hope that further dilapidation will not occur. The portions on the west may be found by an exploration of the 'bights,' 'lanes,' and 'passages' of that district, during which you will discover many striking effects of the cathedral towers above the housetops; now forming the apex to a broad mass; now carrying the eye admiringly upwards from the end of a narrow perspective. And all the while

your mind shares the activity of the eye, and thoughts come crowding in, at some of which you unconsciously arrest your step, and loiter musing in the sunshine.

The principal relic in this quarter is 'the Mint Wall,' a huge mass of masonry which exhibits courses of red brick between the stone, and rows of small openings running through from side to side, which are said to be the holes in which the builders placed their scaffold poles. It may be that after satisfying the desire of your eye upon this, you will stroll away to St Paul's church, which stands near the castle 'dyking,' or ditch; a curious little edifice with a bell-cote and rough-looking apse; by no means "a thing of beauty," remarkable only because of the tradition that two older churches preceded it on the same site, one of which was built by Paulinus the missionary. According to another version, Paulinus had converted Blecca the reeve of Lincoln, who founded a small church, of which Honorius laid the first stone. So it may be that on this site the name of a God greater than Wodin was first preached to the dwellers in this north-eastern province of Mercia.

According as your eye rests on castle or cathedral, so will glimpses of history and her personages appear to the mind. King Arthur, far in the misty past, marching hither with his warriors to defeat Colgern and Cerdic: Turold the shire-reeve, chiefly memorable because Godiva of Coventry was his sister: Ranulf the great Earl of Chester cleverly surprising and capturing the castle aided by three knights only; lowering himself from the wall by night shortly afterwards to escape

the besiegers; returning with the army of Empress Maud, fighting a battle and taking Stephen prisoner, although "like a roaring lion the king remained on the field, gnashing with his teeth, and foaming like a mountain boar. If there had been a hundred like him, he would not have been taken captive," says Roger of Wendover. Henry II. appears, repeating the solemn ceremony of his coronation, followed by Geoffrey Plantagenet, his son by the Lord Clifford's daughter, who while yet a minor was made Bishop of Lincoln. Then Giraldus Cambrensis coming to study with St Hugh of Burgundy, the Bishop who took delight in excellent architecture, and who caused Fair Rosamond's bones to be cast out of the grave at Godstowe with marks of indignity; exasperated perhaps by the scandal brought upon the Church by her son. Then Becket, the proud Archbishop, flits across the retrospect, hastening away from the King's displeasure. Then comes William the Lion from Scotland, and pays homage to John, and on the same day the English King helps carry the corpse of Bishop Hugh to its tomb in the cathedral. Then to aid the Barons' conspiracy come the army of the Dauphin, but the Earl of Pembroke cuts them to pieces, and the city is cruelly sacked. Then in the words of Gower the rhymer—

> "Of the great clerke Grosteste,
> I rede how busy that he was
> Upon the clergie, an head of bras
> To forge, and make it for to telle
> Of such things as befelle."

Was it the brazen head that prompted the learned

and excellent Bishop Grosseteste when he said to the friar who made a wry face over the cup of good wine which he had to drink as a penance, "Dearest brother, if you frequently had such a penance, you would have a much better regulated conscience."

Then Edward I. and Queen Eleanor appear, taking part in the magnificent ceremonial of the removal of Bishop Hugh's body to its new tomb beyond the choir. Then ten years later comes a funeral procession from Harby with the corpse of a queen, makes a short rest, and pursues its mournful way to London, and ere long a stone cross of graceful beauty commemorates the incident, and King Edward's sorrow. Of that cross no trace now remains. A few years more, and

"The date a thousand was and thre hundred euen,
At Lincolne the parlement was in Lyndesay and Kesteuen.
At the Pask afterward his Parlement set he,
The gode King Edward, at Lincolne his cite."

Then during the turmoil of the Reformation we see the riotous uprising in support of the old religion, and the beheading of Lord Hussey for his part therein, and Henry the Eighth's wrathful proclamation against "the rude commons of one shire, and that the most brute and bestial of the whole realme." And other scenes and other personages pass before us, until at last the Earl of Manchester captures the city and holds it for the Parliament.

Now we cross to the eastern side of the street, where the Exchequer Gate with its central arch and two wickets gives entrance to the Cathedral Close. Among the vicissitudes through which it has passed, none could

have been more deplorable than its occupation as a public-house, as was the case until within recent years. The architect of Edward the First's reign little anticipated such a desecration as that. Since then it has been restored, and is now the depository of the wills of the diocese.

On passing through, as the western front appears backed by the two tall towers, you will hardly check an exclamation of mingled surprise and admiration at the exceeding beauty of the mighty group. Your first impulse will be to find a convenient place for a long look, and thence pore over the whole as a magnificent picture. There from the days of the Conqueror down to the reign of George III., and the restorations of our own time, the workmanship of different centuries is composed into harmony. You might almost fancy that the stone had lost its gravity, so light does the architecture appear. What is there in those lofty arches, the range of arcades, the series of niches, the vast assemblage of intersecting curves, and the quaint sculptures, which, so to speak, lifts up and lightens the ponderous mass with such a fascinating effect?

To pace slowly round the building, scanning the details, prolongs your pleasure, and teaches you a singularly interesting architectural lesson. The south-east porch is especially remarkable: with its receding mouldings and shafts, and profuse carving, it will tempt you to pause. Should your eye happen to stray upwards during the halt, you will observe the effigy of the traditional overlooker leaning over an angle of the parapet with a witch on his shoulders.

The interior is rich in attractions, suggesting so

much to the mind while delighting the eye, that the longer you stay the more will you take interest in the rarities of art that surround you. The choir is a master-piece of Early English art, testifying still to the reputation of St Hugh, as the bishop who loved good architecture is called by the old writers. "Nothing," says Mr Parker, "can well exceed the freedom, delicacy, and beauty of this work; indeed, there is an exuberance of fancy which leads us almost to think that the workmen ran wild with delight." Your own feeling and observation will confirm these remarks while you note the graceful foliage of the capitals, the groups of slender columns, in which detached shafts and perpendicular lines of crockets heighten the effect. The carving of the stalls has been described as the "finest in England," and the double arcade along the walls is an example of over-finish which shows that cost did not deter the designer of the twelfth century.

The large circular windows of the transept are of different periods: that to the north, a remarkable specimen of what is called 'plate-tracery,' and representing the church on earth and the church in heaven, is described by the authority above quoted, as "the earliest and most remarkable window of its kind in England." For nearly six hundred years have those gorgeous colours brightened with the dawn and darkened with sunset.

Turn your eyes below, and look at the bases about the floor. The bold deeply-cut mouldings are as beautiful in their kind as the wavy foliage. In some of them you will find an example of the hollow so deeply cut that it will hold water. There are chapels

of varied beauty which perpetuate the names of the bishops their builders; some of which names you may read on the neighbouring tombs. The verger if asked will point out the site where Bishop Remigius, who built the Norman portion of the west front, was buried; and that on the south side of the choir assigned to Henry of Huntingdon. Queen Eleanor's cenotaph, which stood under the eastern wall, was destroyed during the civil war; but the tomb of John of Gaunt's wife still remains; and a fragment of a shrine on the south side of the choir is still said to have been the burial-place of "little St Hugh," the crucified boy.

As we have seen, the choir was built towards the close of the twelfth century. The nave is of the first, and the presbytery of the last half of the thirteenth century. The latter, which may be regarded as a prolongation of the choir to the eastward beyond the line of the old Roman city wall, is sometimes described as the 'angel choir,' because of the angelic sculptures which occupy the spandrils of the triforium arches. You must use a good glass, or ascend to the gallery to discover all their merits, but your trouble will be well repaid. Those thirty robed figures, with outspread wings in different attitudes, seem to embody the loftiest sentiments of thanksgiving, adoration, and prayer. Truly the charm of the east within rivals the charm of the west without.

Much more than is here mentioned remains to be seen: the lanthorn of the central tower; cloisters with their vaulted ceiling of dark old oak, one of the few instances of the use of wood instead of stone in that

position; and two Roman relics: a sepulchral slab of but little importance, and a tessellated pavement sheltered by a roof in the quadrangle. Besides these you may see a number of old mutilated tombs; and then conclude your survey with a peep at the library, which is one of Wren's works; and a visit to the chapter-house; the latter a ten-sided chamber with a vaulted roof and ribs radiating from a central pillar.

I saw Great Tom, a bell weighing nearly five tons and a half, on my way up the tower. It bears the same inscription as its far-famed predecessor—*Suaviter sonans ad salutem*, but is less musical in tone. The height of the tower added to that of the hill on which it stands widens the view to a surprising extent. Westwards you can look far away across Robin Hood's favourite forest haunts, and round to pale distances which seem remote enough to be near the heart of the realm. To the east appear the wolds which we crossed on our way to Louth, and beyond, if eyes may be trusted, there is a glimmer of the sea. Ermine Street looks like a broad white stripe, miles in length, running straight as a dart to the north, until it disappears in a wood. Had we time for a walk in that direction we might visit Caister, where Rowena presented the cup to Vortigern with her courteous *Waes hael.* Looking nearer we see the Witham burdened with barges that trade to Boston and to Hull, flowing straight as a canal along the hill-foot, until leaving the factories, chimneys, and acres of agricultural implements, it flows through marshy-looking levels to the Wash. The town itself lies open as a map; you can see all that remain of the once fifty churches, and look into the

most private gardens; and immediately beneath the tower into the snug inclosure, where the ruins of the Bishop's palace nestling under trees and ivy look very picturesque. Leagues of the broad green vale spread beneath your eye, and you see how the Witham opposed by the hill changes its course from north to south-east. As geologists tell us, that vale was once an estuary, rolling along the foot of the heights and washing away whatever elevation lay between. The cemetery gleams in the sunshine on the opposite slope. From that southern summit stretches away the great table-land, known as Lincoln Heath, which we shall cross in the next stage of our travel.

Though it be but fancy, there is pleasure in fancying that some one of the leafy plots in the region below may answer to the poet's description.

> "Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite
> Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.
> News from the humming city comes to it
> In sound of funeral or of marriage bells;
> And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you hear
> The windy clanging of the Minster clock;
> Although between it and the garden lies
> A league of grass, wash'd by a slow broad stream,
> That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the oar,
> Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,
> Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge
> Crown'd with the Minster towers."

While walking round the Minster yard you will see a few house-fronts which are worth examination; some exhibit shields, or curiously carved brackets; and in the rear of the houses on the south you may see an

old buttressed barn-like building with round-headed windows, now used as stables. And other decayed buildings, which show signs of having belonged to the church, rear their venerable stone-work above the tops of the walls in the same neighbourhood.

I found more than enough to occupy my time for nearly two days, then having taken a parting stroll round the Cathedral, I descended the hill and took the long straight street leading to the south. 'Below-hill' has antiquities to be proud of as well as above: the church of St Mary le Wigford on the left has a tall Norman tower, which, as antiquaries tell us, was built by the Saxon inhabitants of the upper city when, by the demolition of their dwellings to make room for the castle and cathedral, they were compelled to migrate to the swampy flats below the hill. The tall tower next beyond is that of St Peter's at *Gowts*, a church of the same date, which reminds us by its distinctive name of early drainage works, and its erection near the *drains* or *sluices*. On the edge of the street in front of the church stands the conduit, the "new castelle of the conduit," as Leland calls it, enabling us to assign its erection to the reign of Henry VIII. The outer corners are finished with diagonal buttresses, a row of foliated arcades extends along the front and ends, and the gable above the latter is relieved by a canopied niche. Thus it combines in a remarkable degree the ornamental with the useful. A little farther, and we come to a house on the right, where concealed behind a modern mask are the remains of John of Gaunt's palace, to which the oriel window once belonged that we saw at the castle. A few paces farther on the

left bring us to the so-called John of Gaunt's stables, a long low edifice, which was once the Hall of St Mary's Guild. It dates from the twelfth century, and should its description as "a specimen of the most finished Norman style" have been one of your studies, an examination of its pilaster-buttresses, its cornice rich in foliage and animal figures, and its gateway arch, round in the front and pointed in the rear, will afford you instructive pleasure.

"And so was new Lincoln made out of a piece of old Lincoln by the Saxons," says our old acquaintance, Leland.

CHAPTER V.

Lincoln Heath—First-rate Farming—Surprising Transformation—What Mr Pusey saw—What Arthur Young saw—Dunston Pillar—Romans, Angles, Kings, and Corpses—The Green Man—Bottle Conjurors—Navenby—Wellingore—Welbourne—Leadenham—Proud of the Church—Fulbeck—Pleasant Scenery—Caythorpe—Thick end of a Mile—Barkston—Cervus non Servus—Syston—Belton: a wonderful Church—Grantham—Isaac Newton's Battle—The Grammar School—The Schoolboy—The Way to Fame—The Angel—Peter's Hill—Statue of Newton—The Inauguration—Lord Brougham's Address—The Snore—The Breakfast—Monckton Milnes—Sir Benjamin Brodie—Professor Owen—The Bishop of Lincoln.

Desiring to see the region known as Lincoln Heath, I mounted the steep hill on the southern side of the vale, and soon the green pasture slopes with their striking view of the city were left behind, and I entered upon the broad table-land, which from a wild waste has been converted into prosperous farms. Near the brow stands a large building. "That's the Lunatic 'sylum," said a labourer, answering my question. "They're always a-makin' on't bigger." Hence the great undulating upland stretches away to the southwards field after field: here waving grain, there rows of 'stooks' and wagons busy 'leading;' yonder acres of stubble looking somewhat mournful, yet relieved by

the verdure of large fields of turnips, all fenced by low neatly-clipped hedgerows. Above these hedges huge stacks uprear their bulk, singly, or in clusters that at a distance might be taken for a village. The farm-buildings are white, with gray-tiled roofs; and the roads are long white stripes that fatigue your eyes with sunshiny glare between broad margins of grass and gooseweed. Except the excellence of tillage there is but little of beauty in such a landscape; but there is something in this which appeals to your imagination. Lincoln Heath once extended twenty miles to the north and twenty to the south of the city; a black dreary expanse. We looked down on the northern half from the cathedral tower. Now the whole region produces generous crops of grain and roots, and supports a thriving population. The transformation, which may be regarded as an agricultural triumph on the grandest scale, has been effected within the present century. The improvement must have been active, for Mr Pusey, who travelled over this tract in 1842, described it in terms that still apply, and as the words of a first-rate agriculturist appeal forcibly to farmers, I take leave to quote his description. Setting out in November from Sleaford, the southern end of the Heath (we came up from the north), he found himself on high ground which "presented a cultivated exuberance such as he had never seen before. Farm succeeded farm," he writes, "each appearing to be cultivated by the owner for example, not, as was really the case, by a tenant for profit; and so for miles we passed on through fields of turnips without a blank or a weed, on which thousands after thousands of long-

woolled sheep were feeding in netted folds; and so large as well as regular were the turnips in the narrow rows, that the lower halves which remained in the ground, when the upper part had been consumed, seemed to pave these sheepfolds. Every stubble-field was clean and bright, all the hedges kept low, and neatly trimmed; every farm-house well built, with spacious courts, and surrounded by such rows of high, long, saddle-backed ricks, as showed that the land did not forget to return in August what it had received from the fold in December, since the number of these farm-houses, which might always be seen at one view, proved that the size of the farms would not account for the extent of the rick-yards. Yet this land, so loaded with roots and with corn, showed no mark of natural fertility. On the contrary, it is a fawn-coloured sand about six inches deep, lying on a dry, thirsty, walling-stone."

Very different was Arthur Young's impression. The Heath in his day was an expanse of furze, ling, and nettles, populous with rabbits, and tenanted by a very few hardy occupiers who paid as rent two rabbits an acre. With these facts in mind may we not say there seems something astonishing in the transformation which the wold-farmers have effected?

"Dubbut looäk at the waäste; theer warn't not feäd for a cow;
Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an' looäk at it now—
Warn't worth nowt a haäcre, an' now theer 's lots o' feäd,
Fourscore yows upon it an' some on it doon in seäd."

Dunston Pillar rising in the view lends itself to the contrast, for it was once a lighthouse for the

Heath. It stands in a grove near the sixth mile-stone, a square column of stone about eighty feet high terminated by a statue, having been erected, as the inscription tells, in 1751, *Utilitati Publicæ*. The local histories record sundry instances of travellers lost at night and not a few who perished on the wild waste before the friendly light was displayed. The statue was set up in 1810, by Robert Earl of Buckinghamshire, to commemorate the fiftieth year of George the Third's reign. With arm a-kimbo, and heroic attitude, it looks very much like the wonderful statue that once stood in the middle of the roadway at King's Cross.

My desire to mount and survey the prospect from the top of the pillar was disappointed owing to the decayed condition of the wooden stair. It had been unsafe for years, said the woman at the lodge. To gaze from that commanding height across so bright a landscape and recall a few incidents from the Past would have been an agreeable episode in our afternoon's walk. For, as the Rev. Edward Trollope has pleasantly told, we should see the Sixth Legion (*Legio sexta victrix*) march along the Heath—then Constantine hastening to join his father at Eboracum—then the Angles swarming up from the flat lands—the funeral procession of Bishop Hugh on its way to Lincoln, where King John, with a throng of archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls, and barons, took part in the burial rites—then the Sheriff of Lincolnshire with his troop, escorting to prison the Grand Preceptor and Knights Templars who had been seized at Temple Bruer by command of Edward II.—then an escort guarding John the captive King of France, and his son, who afterwards

made a famous name as Philip the Bold—then another funeral procession, that of Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, slain at the battle of Wakefield, moving towards the burial-place at Fotheringay, with Richard of Gloucester among the followers—then Henry VIII. and Queen Catherine Howard journeying to York—then Charles I. riding to set up his banner at Lincoln; all succeeded by marchings and countermarchings of Royalists and Roundheads, until the final capture of Grantham secures Lincolnshire for the Parliament.

Not wishing to visit Sleaford, I turned from the high road at the *Green Man*. While I drank a glass of ale, the landlady, pointing to the large farm-house which stands under the shadow of great elms on the opposite side of the road, said, "Yon was a *Green Man* worth looking at. Yon was it. This was only the place where the ostlers and such like lived. Ah! there was some life on the road in them times: five coaches both ways every day. 'T was the Great Northern polished 'em all off; and now we must do the best we can. No coach customers now. None but country folk, and Irish harvestmen. Rough customers them be. Lend 'em a big stone bottle, and you 'll never see it again." A large party of the bottle-conjurors were drinking a parting cup at the door to animate their migration to Yorkshire; for hereabouts the harvest was finished (Aug. 26), and the gleaners were busy among the stubble.

In quitting highway for byeway I hoped for a change of scenery. The lane led me across Ermine Street to Navenby, a village large enough to light

itself with gas. There I struck a route for the south-western corner of the county, and soon came to pleasant windings between tall unclipt hedgerows. Villages are numerous: scarcely have you left one behind than the church-tower of the next beyond comes in sight: now Wellingore, now Welbourne. Then tall ash-trees beautify the way; and animated by the rustling of the leaves I walked on to Leadenham, and found comfortable quarters at *The George*.

The landlord, feeling proud of his village, would show me the church next morning. The churchyard looks pretty with its rows of leafy limes; but restorations, and not trees, were what I was expected to admire, especially the east window of stained glass, brought from Belgium; and the arch. He did not see, he said, why the Church of England should not have a revival as well as other churches. "If you are fond of churches," he said as we parted, "you will see enough of them between this and Grantham."

And so I did, and a pleasant road withal. Fulbeck church, with its quaint finials, and carved groups of animals and birds, and grim gurgoyles, is a specimen worth examination. On the adjacent green stands a stone cross, and all around the trees grow so thickly, that when you look back from the rise of the road beyond, the village appears as if smothered in foliage. Now hill and dale diversify the landscape, and the distant views are delightfully rural. A little beyond Caythorpe, and there sits an "owd" stone-breaker, who says that "the gainest way is thruff Normanton:" another instance of peculiar pronunciation; but when he spoke of the "thick end of a mile," it reminded me of

the 'thick league' of a certain rustic whom I once accosted on the sandy wastes of Friesland.

Onward winds the road through villages and past churches, which afford you a sufficient excuse for a brief halt. '*Cervus non Servus* is the motto on the sign under which I dined at Barkston. About Syston you hear the folk speak very respectfully of Sir John Thorold, one of the chief men of the county. Is he a descendant of the reeve, Godiva's brother? Belton church is something to wonder at, so full is it of excellent sculptures and monuments of the Custs and Brownlows; its sepulchral chapel with fan-vaulted ceiling, large Norman column covered with diaper work, and curious old font. In the churchyard a wheel cross, supported by a granite column, commemorates Horace William Cust, who was slain at the Alma. A house that fronts the green bears the epigraph *Piæ Senectæ Domus*, and from the centre of the sward rises a cross. Belton House, in a park on the left, was built, as is said, after designs by Wren, and once entertained William III. at dinner.

A little farther along the road and the tall gracefully slender spire of Grantham comes in sight, shooting up more than two hundred feet from the trees. The church itself, as you will see on arrival, will repay whatever of study you may bestow thereon.

But if you have come hither as on a pilgrimage, cherishing in head and heart the memory of the great philosopher, you will perhaps find your attention drawn from St Wolfran's church, all beautiful though it be, to other objects and associations. In this churchyard the timid delicate boy, Isaac Newton, fought and won

a battle with his fists; and rounded off his victory by rubbing against the wall the nose of the conquered school-fellow whose foul kick had provoked the combat. It would be a telling subject for a painter: mind against matter; for the young mathematician, inspired by this success out of doors, set himself so diligently to his studies, that from being one of the lowest boys in the school he soon became the highest.

The school-house, a venerable, modest-looking edifice, built in the reign of Henry VII., stands a little to the west of the church. The interior presents the usual white-washed appearance, with nothing remarkable except the name NEWTON rudely cut on the splay of one of the windows at the upper end. It is, however, an apocryphal memorial, which may have been scratched in the stone by some mischievous schoolboy, and must therefore be left among uncertainties, notwithstanding that it was decorated with a couple of laurel leaves on the day when Grantham set up a statue in honour of him to whom the name belonged. But can we not picture to ourselves the lad sitting here at the desk, dreamy and inattentive at first; then taking the start into knowledge by which a few years later he raised natural philosophy to a height of sublimity, and thereby explained a mystery of the universe which had baffled philosophers from ages primeval? Two hundred years ago was he sitting here among the boys, little dreaming that all his greatest discoveries would be made before his twenty-fourth year: and here, placed by his proud and loving master in a conspicuous place, he stood when about to depart for Cambridge, while the aged man made a speech in his praise,

and declared him as an honour and example to the school. Among the beaming eyes then looking on there must have been a few that grew moist with mingled emotions.

The town, built on a hilly site, looks clean and cheerful. A cross stands in the market-place: the *Angel Hotel*—once a Commandery of the Knights Templars—exhibits features of the olden time, with buttressed gateway, an oriel above supported by a gilded bracket, flanking bays and gurgoyles, and ivy creeping up in two places. Continuing up the street, past gables that tell of the days when Newton was a schoolboy, we come to Peter's Hill, a spacious elevation, once the site of one of the Eleanor Crosses; now occupied by grass-plots, a few trees, and a bronze statue on a high pedestal of Anglesey marble. The statue, by Theed, is one of our few good ones. It represents Newton in his gown as Master of Arts, delivering a lecture to his class, illustrated by a diagram on the nature of the parabola, held in the left hand.

On the 21st of September, 1858, a great gathering was held on this spot. Hither came in procession from the Grammar School lords and baronets; dignitaries of the Church; squires of ancient name; men famous in science and literature, and the schoolboys, one carrying on a velvet cushion Newton's prism, lent by Cambridge, another his telescope, lent by the Royal Society. The route which they took had been trodden many a time by the famous schoolboy: they passed the site of the house in which he lodged, using the garret as his study; and here they took seats amid the crowd, enlivened by the presence of fair dames and damsels, while Lord

Brougham delivered an inaugural address. It was an impressive spectacle. The brave old man stood here in the bright sunshine at the foot of the statue, recounting the merits of the mighty philosopher whom it commemorates; magnifying his discoveries and his fame; recognizing with vigorous eloquence his right place among the sons of genius, and making many a Lincolnshire heart as proud of their Newton as the dwellers on Avon of their Shakespeare. Among my special touches of good fortune I reckon having been present to witness the scene.

In the middle of the speech, while hundreds were listening with earnest attention, a loud snore was heard not far from the orator. It attracted many an eye to one of the magnates of the county, who sat with drooping head and open mouth on the bench among his peers.

The out-door ceremonial was followed by a breakfast, to which four hundred sat down, in the Corn Exchange. It ended with many speeches, among which were heard Monckton Milnes' graceful phrases; Sir Benjamin Brodie's sententious periods; Professor Owen's interesting account of what had taken place in the Council of the Royal Society when, on receiving a manuscript from Newton, then a young man at Cambridge, they ordered "that the author be solemnly thanked in the name of the Society for his very ingenious discourse:" while the Bishop of Lincoln, referring to the alleged discrepancies between Scripture and the facts of science, showed that two truths might run parallel perhaps for years before their point of coalescence could be arrived at. And so was the statue inaugurated.

CHAPTER VI.

Walk to Belvoir—Harlaxton—A Footpad—The Rutland Arms—An Early Stroll—Memorable Places—The French marching to Lincoln Fair—Crabbe's Curacy and Rectory—Lordby Terraces—The Battery—The Woods—The Duke's Walk—The Mausoleum—The Castle—Beauties of Art—Another Start—Another Prospect—Swish athurt—The Drift—The Three Queens—A Trudge through Stubble—Stoke Rochford—A Model Village—Mathematical Farmer—The Great North Road—Colsterworth—A Deserted Village—Woolsthorpe—English Montpellier—Newton's Birth-place—The Sun-dial—A Talk with the Mistress—The Birth-Chamber—The Study—The Apple-tree—Twilight Thoughts.

REMEMBERING that Belvoir Castle is but about seven miles from Grantham, I thought a walk thither would agreeably occupy my evening, and thereupon set forth. The road passes Harlaxton, a great white house that peeps up from the trees of a finely-wooded manor. Here an old stone-breaker told me of a short cut—"a reg'lar footpad leadin' right away down to Denton;" and when I asked him if he were satisfied with his lot, he answered, "I 'd as lief be on the steän-heap as anywhere else. It 's better 'n harvestin'. There 's no master to call ye idle. And if ye do n't 'arn nothin', ye do n't ha' nothin'." The "footpad" led me into a region of hills and woods, and by-and-by, on emerging from the trees at the foot of a steep declivity I saw

the proud castle of Belvoir rising on an opposite brow. In the hollow beneath lies the village of Woolsthorpe —not the Woolsthorpe which we may hope to visit to-morrow,—whence by a footpath across the park you may pass under the shadow of the trees that beautify the hill-foot, and enjoy the while a striking view of the stately towers that crown the broad slope of foliage.

The *Rutland Arms* displays a conspicuous peacock in the sign over the door, offers comfortable quarters, and greets the visitor with a pleasant outlook. It stands but a few yards from the edge of the wood, and is commonly known as the 'Bever Inn.' Though dusk was creeping on when I arrived, I could see enough to inspire me with agreeable anticipations for the morrow.

Very agreeably were they realized. Summer with all her charms gladdened the morning; the woods stirred by a breeze seemed to thrill with laughter, and the whole landscape lay basking in unbroken sunshine. Allured early from my pillow, I mounted the zig-zag acclivity beneath the thickly overhanging branches which leads to the castle, and was soon upon the terrace feasting my eyes with the prospect thence beheld. It is glorious, if only because of its extent. The horizon is thirty miles distant, and within that great sweep lie hills and woods, and fields and pastures innumerable, sprinkled with farmsteads, villages, and windmills. It is said that two hundred places are discernible and may be identified by name from this commanding height. Twenty miles to the west a pale cloud of smoke marks the site of Nottingham; in the north-east, twenty-five miles distant, the towers of Lincoln Minster show against

the clear sky; and beneath spreads the fertile Vale of Belvoir, as Stukeley says, "under the Lincolnshire alpes."

Among the nearer villages are Redmile, Granby, and Bottesford; and as your eye roves up the vale and to the pale green distances, you will perhaps speculate as to the site of Whatton, the birth-place of Archbishop Cranmer; of Stoke Bardolph, where Henry VII. defeated the partisans of Lambert Simnel; of Colwick Hall, the home, after her marriage, of Mary Chaworth, Byron's early love; and of the course of Trent, where, as Philip Bailey sings—

> "By rock and mead, and grove and isle,
> He goes from deep to deep."

And you may indulge in a mental vision of Roger of Wendover, Prior of Belvoir, sitting down to chronicle the disorderly march of the French troops through the Vale on their way to Lincoln in 1217, when Louis the Dauphin laid claim to the English crown. He describes them as robbers and free-booters, laying hands on everything. "Because the soldiers of the French kingdom, being, as it were, the refuse and scum of that country, left nothing at all untouched, and their poverty and wretchedness were so great that they had not enough bodily clothing to cover their nakedness." It comforts one even at this day to know that a few days later they were utterly defeated by Henry the Third's army in the battle which was long remembered as "Lincoln Fair."

And among the villages that lie below are Stathern, to the curacy of which Crabbe removed from his splen-

did but uncongenial residence in the castle; and Muston, where he was rector, and wrote greater part of the *Borough*. In his dedication to the Duke of Rutland he says that while composing the poem he "had all the advantage to be derived from prospects extensive and beautiful, and from works of grandeur and sublimity." When describing the sea-shore, he inquires

> "Can scenes like these withdraw thee from thy wood,
> Thy upland forest or thy valley's flood?"

Scott, writing to Crabbe in 1812, remarks: "You must be delightfully situated in the Vale of Belvoir—a part of England for which I entertain a special kindness, for the sake of the gallant hero Robin Hood, who, as probably you will readily guess, is no small favourite of mine; his indistinct ideas concerning the doctrine of *meum* and *tuum* being no great objection to an outriding borderer."

No wonder that Robert de Todeni, the Conqueror's standard-bearer, chose this height for his stronghold; for it is indeed *bel à voir*. From his day down to that of the present Duke of Rutland, how many eyes have gazed with delight over that goodly landscape!

> "Till Belvoir's lordly terraces the sign to Lincoln sent,
> And Lincoln sped the message on o'er the wide vale of Trent,"

writes Macaulay; and with truth, for the terraces are indeed lordly. And what is more, you may roam about them at pleasure, for the Duke leaves them open to all comers, and miles of woodland walks besides.

It was in the old castle that Ben Jonson's *Gypsies Metamorphosed* was represented: a lively piece with

songs, in one of which the Countess of Rutland is thus complimented:

> "Both your brav'ry and your bounty
> Style you mistress of the county."

And in another piece, rare Ben makes Robin Hood invite "all the shepherds and shepherdesses of the Vale of Belvoir, to a feast in the Forest of Sherwood."

Of that old castle no portion is now visible from the outside; but the basement incloses a chamber of arched masonry dark with age, known as the Staunton tower, and now used as a wine-cellar, which is said to date from the times of Robert the Standard-bearer. The present edifice has been built within the present century; and with its towers and turrets, arcades and bays, is so varied in outline as to appear alike picturesque and handsome. *Pour y parvenir* is the motto in the ducal arms.

At the end of the Bastion Terrace is placed a battery of seven guns, more for show than use, as we may believe. *Strasbourg par J. Berenger*, 1758, appears on a fillet round the breech of each one, and each has a name, and purports to be *Ultima Ratio Regum*—and *Pluribus nec impar*. The names are *La Radieuse*—*La Temeraire* — *La Meurtrière* — *La Turbulente* — *La Remarquable*—*La Tranquille*, and *L'Americaine*. There are other terraces on the south side of the castle which look upon the private grounds, and are shown to special visitors only.

There are five miles of woods stretching along the hill-slopes, through which I had time for a pleasant ramble, as the castle is not opened to visitors before

ten o'clock. Besides the many dim paths that beguile you onwards into charming nooks of woodland scenery, there is the Duke's Walk winding along under magnificent trees to elevations that command interesting views of the neighbourhood and the castle. In contrast with the bald expanses of Lincolnshire the scenery is the more delightful. And if you get leave to visit the mausoleum, you will be impressed by another contrast: a silent grove and funereal-like gloom through which you pass to the sepulchral edifice, where brazen gates inclose a beautiful monument, representing the late Duchess rising to the angelic abodes and welcomed by four of her children who preceded her to the tomb. The effect is heightened by the soft amber light that steals in from above.

Being the only visitor, I was not hurried in my walk through the castle, and the guide-maiden did not confine me to the outside of the light railing which admits large parties but a few feet within the entrance of the several rooms. Hence I could look out at the windows, and examine closely whatever attracted my notice; and had a twofold enjoyment in the beauty of Nature outspread below the towers, and the beauty of Art within. In the guard-room which you first enter is a model of the former castle, and a gilded figure of the original founder, the Standard-bearer. In the Regent's Gallery stands the remarkable chair fashioned out of a tree, "which in history," so runs the inscription, "must be considered as surpassing every tree of the forest, being that behind the farm of La Haye Sainte, and close to where the Duke of Wellington frequently took his station during the Battle of Waterloo." Por-

traits of England's aristocracy and beauty are numerous on the walls, with Cromwell and William the Third among them, and Stothard's painting of the Death of Lord Robert Manners, the Duke of Rutland's brother, on board the *Resolution*: on which melancholy incident Crabbe moralizes in his poem *The Village*.

From this gallery you may enter the chapel and contemplate through the openings in the screen, if you are a lover of what is called "sacred art," an altar-piece by Murillo, representing the Holy Family. Or you may visit the Library, or pass on to the Duchess's Boudoir, where more than anything else the view from the window will excite your admiration. But in the Elizabethan Saloon, and in the Picture Gallery, Art almost bewilders you with her masterpieces—portraits, landscapes, and historical subjects. Among the numerous great painters whose works cover the walls, there are two to whom your attention will be especially directed. Twenty-four illustrations of Dutch proverbs by Teniers are comprehended in one; Poussin's Seven Sacraments in the other. To many visitors the Hollander is more attractive than the Frenchman.

The maid took her fee when we descended to the hall; and I took my knapsack and started to find the shortest way to Newton's birth-place. It was pleasant while striking a south-easterly line through the park, to skirt tall thick woods, tread acres of grass, push through plantations, and cross the bridge over the broad shallow lake. Pleasant also having mounted the eastern slope to discover a satisfactory reason for sitting down and looking back on the scene: a fresh and perhaps the most remarkable prospect of Belvoir.

The wooded heights, with the castle thrown well up against the sky, are seen stretching away to the left in wavy outlines so thickly overgrown that in all the distance but one break occurs in the dark dense foliage —a small pasture that seems to gleam by contrast. As we saw on a nearer view, the trees within that shelter pine for want of air. Nevertheless the mass forms a good background to the picture spread out before it: the broad expanses of grass broken by clumps and rows of trees, and yet more diversified by sunshine and shadow,—the kennel, seemingly a small village solidly built of stone, where the farther slope descends to the bridge,—the long broad lake, with cattle grouped about the margin, or standing knee-deep in the sparkling water, apparently in mute admiration of the swans that glide lazily past. To lounge on a grassy slope in warm sunshine looking at such a prospect as that, leaves a very agreeable holiday impression on one's memory. The sight of the kennel reminds us that the Belvoir Hunt was once very famous, as may be read in five quarto volumes containing the exploits of the fox-hounds of fifty years ago.

I resumed my way up the slope; emerged into a pretty lane; came to the secluded little village of Harston, where a labourer advised me "not to mind the pad, but go swish athurt the wheat-close and thruff the turnip-close, and then into the drift, and that 'ud take me to the *Three Queens*." I asked what he meant by the drift? "Oh, it's a owld roäd, as owld as the Romans, some says. It ends where Tom Cribb fowt the black man." By this latter remark he proved that more than fifty years had not been sufficient to

destroy the memory of a prize-fight around the spot on which it was fought.

So I went swish, that is, diagonally, across the wheat-field, and presently struck the 'drift,' which has the appearance of an old pack-horse road, dividing for some miles the counties of Lincoln and Leicester. It is now a charming lane, a rough red track, rising through the 'holt,' overshadowed by ash, beech, and dark Scotch firs, and bordered by ferns and nettles tall as wheat. Here was an unexpected pleasure! And the branches answered so merrily to the breezy salutation that it seemed as if the trees did indeed "clap their hands."

I thought to refresh at the *Three Queens*, but the former public-house is now a farm-house, which however gave me a drink of water, and answered my question as to the route by "Turn you that-a-way." This new departure took me at once into the fields, and I trudged across acres of stubble; scrambled through hedges where there was no gate, now ascending a long slope, now descending; surprising here and there a party of reapers—in one instance a blithesome group of men and maidens, who sat under the up-piled sheaves eating their dinner or drowsily ruminating. How they stared to see me in such unfrequented places, and wondered how I found my way. "Good luck to ye, master," said one swarthy fellow when I told him that the sun was my guide. It was heavy work, but after some miles, I escaped from the stubble and came to Stoke Rochford.

This appears to have been a favourite station of the Romans, for relics of their buildings have been disco-

vered. Its distinctive name dates from the occupation by the Rochfords, an old Essex family, one of whom, Sir Saier de Rochford, in the reign of Edward III. was a commissioner of banks and sewers in Lincolnshire, and had two shillings a-day for the safe keeping of the King of France at his castle of Somerton. It is now the residence of the Turnors, to whom the world is much indebted for their care in collecting and preserving relics of Newton and materials for his biography. Newton went to two day-schools before he entered at Grantham; and here at Stoke was one of them: the other was at Skillington, a hamlet about a mile to the right. Besides these associations for the mind there is a pleasant park to look at, containing among its trees an obelisk to Newton's memory; and, bursting from the slope of a hill, a spring of water so copious that Bishop Sanderson describing it says, "it turneth a mill immediately at the mouth thereof, and meeting the river Witham, giveth a good addition thereunto."

I was eager to dine. But Stoke Rochford is a sort of model village: has no shop or public-house; nothing but pretty gabled houses in gardens traversed by well-kept paths, and shrubs, flowers, and trees, and a good church. "You won't find a public-house this side o' Colsterworth," said a road-mender. So I walked on, speculating as to the road by which Newton, when his mother took him from school at the age of fifteen to help manage her farm, used to journey to Grantham market, thinking more of books than of buying and selling, and sometimes sitting under a hedge to work out a problem, while the trusty old man by whom he was accompanied went on and transacted the business.

Among the villages with which the neighbourhood is sprinkled is Boothby, about an hour's walk to the eastward, where in the summer of 1665 one of the great mathematician's early feats was accomplished. "Being forced from Cambridge by the plague," he records, "I computed the area of the hyperbola, to two-and-fifty figures."

A little farther and the byeway joins the Great North Road; and the landscape becomes tame and uninteresting. The great highway seemed almost as quiet as the lonely fields. It was different in the days when twenty-seven stage-coaches rattled along it within twenty-four hours. Now the telegraph wires on tall poles stretch by its side far as eye can see. On approaching Colsterworth I saw Woolsthorpe on the right, but could not turn aside until I had taken an hour's rest at the *Blue Lion*.

The long street of Colsterworth shows signs of the change that has come over it. The busy world now passes by at a distance; and the huge range of empty stables in the rear of the three principal inns, which were busy enough in the time of the twenty-seven coaches, testify mutely of neglect and dilapidation. It sounded ominous, I thought, that the big dog in the *Blue Lion* yard began to bark vehemently as I entered; and that the landlord, whom I found asleep on the sofa, told me he did not see a traveller once a month. But he could manage to feed one, nevertheless; if I "could do with cold roast beef." I did do very well; for nine hours had passed since my breakfast at Belvoir.

It is about a mile from the inn to Woolsthorpe. On the way thither we cross the Witham, a shallow, lively

stream which flows as cheerfully as a mountain brook, careless of the sluggish lot that awaits it in the flat lands. While pacing the footpath towards the little village, let us read what Stukeley says of it. "Wolsthorp," he writes, "is in a pleasant little hollow or convallis, on the west side of the valley of the river Witham, which arises near there; one spring thereof is in this hamlet. It has a good prospect eastward towards Colsterworth. The country hereabout is thought to be the Montpelier of England. The air is exceedingly good; the sharpness of the Mediterranean (midland) being tempered by the softness of the low parts of Lincolnshire, which makes a fine medium agreeable to most constitutions. I have seen many parts of England, and seen none of a pleasanter view than about Colsterworth, and nothing can be imagined sweeter than the ride between it and Grantham. This country consists much of open heath, overgrown with the fragrant *serpyllum*, much like the downs in Wiltshire; differing chiefly in this, that our soil lies upon a white limestone, good for building; that upon chalk. The valleys are gravelly, very delightful. Woods plentiful. Springs and rivulets of the purest water abound." In the present day the landscape as you look eastwards is too naked to answer to this description.

We come presently to the cluster of old-fashioned stone cottages, and the house among them in which the puny premature babe was born whose name will live as long as science or philosophy endures. It was once the manor-house of Woolsthorpe: a low unpretending dwelling, built of coarse stone, with one hinder wing, described by some biographers as of two stories, though

one of the two is nothing but a garret in the high-peaked roof. So many engravings of it have been published that its aspect has become familiar to many a reader. A small fenced garden-plot of grass and flowers spreads before it; the front is closely covered with ivy, which straggles alike over the heavy mullions of the little windows and the inscription which records the memorable birth on Christmas day, 1642, and over the cross-bones borne in the Newton escutcheon. Considering that Galileo died in the same year, we may indulge our fancy with the thought that here his destined successor came into the world at the right time, to carry on the work.

I walked round the house two or three times, and at last, espying a damsel at the back door, asked permission to look at the sun-dial. With ready assent she unlocked the door of a small yard, and there I saw the relic carved on one of the stones facing the south at the corner of the wall. It is about nine inches in length by six in breadth; five feet above the ground; and the lines are still sharp and distinct, but the gnomon has disappeared. A new stone immediately above, of larger dimensions, marks the place of the other dial, which was taken out in 1844 by the Rev. Charles Turnor, for preservation. Both were carved by Newton during his boyhood; probably in one of his grammar school vacations; and are consequently regarded as very precious.

While I was examining the relic the mistress came out, and told me the other was kept in the British Museum. I ventured to rectify her mistake by telling her that it had been presented by Mr Turnor to the

Royal Society, inclosed in an oaken box under a plate of glass; and that she might see it on her next visit to London by calling at Burlington House, where it is preserved with other valuable relics of the great philosopher.

"I was told it was the British Museum," she said. "Why should the Royal Society have it?"

"For four reasons," I answered: "because it was given to them; because Newton was once their President; because they first printed his great book; and because they honoured him while living, and have ever since held his memory in unqualified veneration."

The reasons were perhaps satisfactory, for the lady replied that if "she went up to London next year to see the Exhibition, she would try to get a sight of the other dial," and she invited me into the house and conducted me into one of the front bed-rooms: the birth-chamber of Newton. If the widowed mother could have foreseen as she lay here under the low ceiling that the weakling she nursed so anxiously would one day write the *Principia*, how sweet would have been her consolation. What with the little window and the evening dusk, I could scarcely discern on the small marble tablet over the mantel-piece, a record of the birth and the two well-known lines by Pope—

> "Nature and Nature's Laws lay hid in night,
> God said, Let Newton be, and all was light."

"You should have seen the room," said the lady, "that day of the Grantham procession. It was full of gentlemen who came over on purpose to look at it." She then led me into the adjoining room, and opening the

door of a partitioned-off corner, a mere closet for size, told me it was Newton's study. It smelt fusty, and was so dark that I could not see whether the shelves which the immortal student is said to have put up with his own hands, are yet remaining. It had once two windows, but, in local phrase, they are now "made up."

It is very gratifying to see that the house is well preserved, for which thanks are due to the proprietors of Stoke Rochford. To their appreciative care the world is indebted for many singularly interesting memorials of Newton. Among the collection bequeathed to the Royal Society by the Rev. Charles Turnor are some pieces even of the famous apple-tree, of which every one has read, while many still believe that the sight of an apple falling from that tree suggested to the philosopher his theory of gravitation. Of the tree itself there is no doubt: here it grew until, as some accounts state, it was "removed" in 1820. But in the *Collection* above-named there is a drawing of the tree as it appeared in 1840: a decrepit, hollow, much-decayed stem, too weak to support itself, lying on the ground, yet bearing two green branches still erect. Whenever removed, its remains were carefully preserved by the proprietor of the estate.

As I walked back to Colsterworth in the deepening twilight, recollections of my visit to that low timbered house in Warwickshire coming to my mind, yielded much matter for thought. The philosopher sleeps in Westminster Abbey: the poet in his tomb on the brink of Avon. Both were born within the limits of Mercia. One died in his prime; the other achieved his greatest

works in early life, and saw more than four-score years. Marvellous are their works! The one searching out all the secrets and emotions of human nature; the other reasoning with Nature, drawing from her the secret of her grandest phenomena, and discovering, so to speak, a clue to the Infinite.

"Surely," says Feltham, "nothing awakes our sleeping virtues like the noble acts of our predecessors. They are flaming beacons that fame and time have set on hills to call us to a defence of virtue, whensoever vice invades the commonwealth of man."

CHAPTER VII.

Colsterworth to Corby — Hereward and Burghley — Stamford — Antiquarian Explorations—Stukeley's House—Terra-Cotta Works—Burghley House—Picturesque Exterior—Magnificent Interior—Stately Trees —Idle Thoughts—Gerarde, Verrio, Stothard—Landscape Painter and Village Maiden—John Jones and Sarah Hoggins—Moralizing Baker— St Martin's Church—The Lord Treasurer's Tomb—Whither next? —Suggestions—Thorney—Peterborough—Huntingdon—Whittlesey— Oakham—Stamford a good Starting-point.

It is an hour's walk from Colsterworth to Corby Station, where taking the first train on the morrow, I journeyed to breakfast at Stamford. Among the places lying within a few miles to the east of the railway is Bourn, birth-place of two remarkable men: Hereward, the famous Lord of Brunne, whose name came before us at Croyland; and William Cecil, the first Lord Burghley. There, too, was the dwelling-place of the monk Robert of Brunne, whose rhyming chronicle relates many facts and fables of our early history.

An old acquaintance, whom I fortunately found at home, introduced me to a well-known antiquary, who forthwith took me under his guidance to see all the interesting sights of the town. Situate at the junction of three counties, with a population of eight thousand,

though declining, Stamford has the aspect of a well-to-do market town, where the past still lingers in noteworthy buildings, low gables, thatched houses, even in the principal streets, and an inn sign stretching all across the road, as if for the sake of contrast with the present. It was a borough before the Conquest, having been one of the five Danish burghs. Here stood one of the Eleanor crosses; and here were so many good schools and halls, that once during troubles at Oxford threats were uttered of secession to Stamford. And here, after a course at Grantham School, William Cecil studied, until at the age of fifteen he entered at Cambridge.

Much pleasure and instruction did I gather from the antiquary's remarks during our architectural examination. St Mary's church, with its broach spire, which Scott used to admire when journeying from Edinburgh to London, and its interior peculiarities,—St George's, with its singular recess in each aisle, sunk and pointed, over which the curious have puzzled for many a year, and will perhaps puzzle for many a year to come,—All Saints, with long range of arcades all round the walls,—the curious old building by the riverside, with its five gables and chimneys between and low arch and Norman buttress, all supplied us with topics for discussion. Then by the meadows that border the Welland we walked to St Leonard's Priory, an interesting relic, now one of the appurtenances of a farm, but which retains its Norman arches and arcade, the tooth mouldings, and vesica in the gable above. Then in returning we passed the Infirmary, on the site of the old Gray Friars' monastery, of which the gateway remains. The rusty iron hooks that once held the

statues in place on the wall above still project from the weather-beaten stone. We strolled to the mound on which stood the castle keep in olden time, and thence to the house once inhabited by Stukeley, where we saw his summer-house, and his name in two inscriptions; and in the rear of the premises an ancient gateway through which Charles the First passed when he set out to give himself into the hands of the Scots at Southwell. Then to complete our morning's ramble we visited Blashfield's Terra-Cotta Works, where, however, the processes so nearly resemble those which we saw in a former year at Stoke-upon-Trent, as described in other pages, that further notice is here unnecessary.

The friendly antiquary having to devote the afternoon to his own affairs, I crossed the river into Northamptonshire to visit one of the stately residences which will long be memorable in English history. The last house of the borough as you go out by the turnpike road abuts upon a park wall overhung by trees; and the road looks so white and dusty that on coming presently to the lodge gates you turn the more willingly to the green domain within. What noble trees! You enter a grand avenue of ancient elms, which curving gently onwards across the grassy level, brings you gradually within sight of the mansion built by Queen Elizabeth's sagacious minister.

"Burleigh House, by Stamford town."

It is, indeed, a stately residence, looking so clean and fresh that you would scarcely believe the stone was dug from the Barnack quarries nearly three hundred years ago. The Tudor architects were adepts in producing picturesque effects; and the Lord Trea-

surer's house with its wings and towers, domed turrets, tall spire, and numerous finials, its bays and oriels, and mullioned windows, offers such a variety of combinations that the eye wanders over it with infinite pleasure, while your imagination pictures an interior of corresponding magnificence. And such it is, with its halls, galleries, and chambers; more than six hundred paintings and portraits; statues, tapestry, oak carvings by Grinling Gibbons, and the numerous rarities accumulated by generations of noble collectors. Queen Elizabeth's bed-room, with its hangings of green velvet and gold, is said to remain in the same state as when her royal majesty slept therein; from which we may infer that the Parliament troops who stormed and captured Burghley and took "pillage of the whole house" did leave something behind. "There is no other seat," says Dr Waagen, "which affords so completely, and on so grand a scale, a view of the taste in the arts which prevailed among the English nobility from the middle of the seventeenth till about the end of the eighteenth century."

The time being unpropitious for a sight of the interior, I wandered about the park, pacing the pleasant walks and long green avenues, catching now a sight of the towers of Stamford above the trees; now a perspective glimpse towards Uffington; now a view of water crossed by a bridge, now of shrubberies, the roofs of temples, and gardens. Within its circumference of seven miles the park affords a pleasant variety, and being so thickly timbered—more so than any other park we have visited, it offers us such charming scenes of trees as incline us to desire no other pictures.

The earliest date upon the outside of the house is 1577; another on the north side is 1585, from which we have a sufficient indication of the time of building. A part of the house rests on the foundations of a monastery, which, as is said, are yet to be seen in the cellars.

Idle thoughts for idle hours. Shall we, reclining here on the mossy roots of an ancient elm, imagine the grave Cecil alternating weighty affairs of state with his private and domestic concerns; now advising with his colleagues in London on improvements to be made in the coinage and trade of the realm, on the maintenance of law and religion, or on the best way of repelling the haughty and insolent Spaniard; now talking with his architect, John Thorpe, or, inasmuch as he was a lover of plants, conferring among the garden-plots with his chief gardener Gerarde, the quaint and laborious author of the *Herbal*. Or shall we think about Verrio, who painted such a large extent of the walls and ceilings with mythological subjects, and was so fond of a good dinner that, to punish the cook, who one day sent up a poor dinner, he painted his likeness in the courts of Pluto: of Stothard, who worked here during four summers, touching up Verrio's subjects, and doing good work of his own. Or shall we entertain ourselves with that romantic incident which, as sung by our Laureate, has invested Burghley with a charm appreciated before but by few. When the "landscape-painter" and his wife, a "village maiden," while

> "Summer woods about them blowing
> Made a murmur in the land,"

came travelling hither from that lonely little village in the western shire, where he had married her, seeing on the way "whatever of fair and splendid lay betwixt his home and hers." How she longed more and more for a sight of the cottage which was to be their home,

"Till a gateway she discerns
With armorial bearings stately,
And beneath the gate she turns;
Sees a mansion more majestic
Than all those she saw before:
Many a gallant gay domestic
Bows before him at the door.
And they speak in gentle murmur
When they answer to his call,
While he treads with footstep firmer,
Leading on from hall to hall.
And while now she wonders blindly,
Nor the meaning can divine,
Proudly turns he round and kindly,
'All of this is mine and thine.'
Here he lives in state and bounty,
Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,
Not a lord in all the county
Is so great a lord as he."

We all know what followed; and many a sigh has been breathed over the untimely end of the bride, who, overburthened with her weight of honour, murmur'd

"'Oh, that he
Were once more that landscape painter,
Which did win my heart from me.'
So she droop'd and droop'd before him,
Fading slowly from his side:
Three fair children first she bore him,
Then before her time she died."

Romance and pathos here combine to make a touching story. Whence came the maiden? Who wept for her besides the Lord of Burghley? The answer involves a reminiscence of a former year's travel. Do you remember, gracious reader, an obscure village, Great Bolas by name, through which we walked while exploring Shropshire? There it was that Henry the tenth Earl and first Marquis of Exeter, wooed* and wedded the village maiden, she believing him to be an artist studying Nature in her rustic aspect. As told by the parish register, the story is a very homely one.*

In the history of the family the lady is described as daughter of Thomas Hoggins, Esq.; and Hoggins is quartered with Cecil in the arms. Her portrait, in a group with the Earl and her daughter, by Lawrence, hangs in the billiard-room of the house. She was the Earl's second wife, and bore him three sons and one daughter.

A baker, who sat smoking a cigar under one of the big elms, accosted me as I repassed the avenue: "It 's nice resting here," he said. "What d' ye think o' that?" and he pointed to his burden. "Eight-and-twenty pounds o' bread, barrin' the basket. No joke

* Thus it appears—"No. 54—John Jones of this Parish, and Sarah Hoggins of this Parish, were married in this church by License this thirtieth day of April, in year one thousand seven hundred and ninety, by me Cresswell Tayleur.

This marriage was solemnized between us, { *John Jones,* / *Sarah Hoggins,*

In the presence of { *John Picken,* / *Sarah Adams.*"

For this extract I am indebted to the kindness of the Rev. Norman B. Youge.

to carry that, I can tell ye. I shall have some proper strong beer to drink when I gets to the house. I on'y wish I had it here now. It 's a nice park, ain't it? We 're allowed to come and walk about it of a Sunday. But there ain't many comes. And yet, you see, if 't was to be shet up we should all begin to grumble like anything."

On my way down the street I found out the woman who kept the key of St Martin's church, and went in to look at the Lord Treasurer's tomb. It would be well, I thought, to see that after the majestic mansion. The church itself is a good specimen of late Perpendicular, and having been restored within the past ten years, appears to advantage. The monument stands on the left of the altar within an iron fence: a tall structure of black marble, adorned with heraldic devices, forming a two-arched canopy, under which reclines at full length, clad in armour, wearing the order of the Garter, and holding his wand of office in the right hand, the effigy of the great statesman. Beyond him lie his father, mother, and three sisters, and in the adjoining bay on the west are the fifth Earl with his wife reclining between two figures, which represent Minerva with spear and palladium on one side, and in mourning attitude on the other. It was commenced at Rome during the Earl's life-time, and exhibits much skill in the expression of the faces and disposition of the drapery.

On coming forth into the street and pacing slowly down to the bridge, we see that the best view of the town is this from the south, all its spires and pinnacles appearing to advantage. In old time the group was

greater, for Stamford had nearly twenty churches, but some were destroyed during the wars of the Roses.

Whither next? Here we are looking down on the Welland, not many miles, as will be seen by a glance at the map, from Croyland and the broad flat fen country, where, a fortnight ago, we took one of our initiatory walks into Lincolnshire. Since then, with the aid here and there of wheels, we have circum-perambulated the county: have seen what lies at the heart, as well as the margin, and have thus accomplished a large part of our survey of Eastern England from the Thames to the Humber.

But whither next? is still the question. Shall we take a walk into Cambridgeshire, and view the flat country between Welland and Nene, and Thorney lying midway, famed of old? Or shall we take a trip to Peterborough, where, on the bank of the broad-flowing Nene, King Wulphere founded his monastery of Medehampstead, now replaced by a cathedral whose western front is scarcely to be equalled in Europe? Thence we may traverse Huntingdonshire, the county that "With stilts will stalk through thick and thin," as the rhymer says, and where, in the words of the proverb, "they have churches for mile-stones," and tarry a while at Huntingdon, and look at the twice rebuilt house still pointed out as that in which the "gloomy brewer," as he is mistakenly called, was born, and at the venerable school with its well-worn desks, in which he sat and studied. There too in the main street is a house in which Cowper once sojourned; and on the edge of the town, Hinchinbrook, "a stately pleasant house," says Thomas Carlyle, "among its

shady lawns and expanses, on the left bank of the Ouse river; still stands pretty much as Oliver Cromwell's grandfather left it." Or shall we journey to Whittlesea, and see on a small scale what the Dutch show on a large scale in the basin once filled by the Haarlemmer Meer? Then if we would see more of the fen-country we should find it flat and "dropsical" all the way from Huntingdon to Ely:—from Ely to Peterborough, all flowery, green or yellow or brown according to the season.

Or shall we take a flight in the opposite direction, into the smallest shire, and visit that out-of-the-way little capital—Oakham, which holds a fair once a month, and claims a horseshoe from every noble or royal personage who lodges within its walls or passes through its streets; and displays its toll of shoes in its ancient Norman Hall: horseshoes three or four feet in length, some adorned with a coronet, and marked with the names of the donors from Queen Elizabeth down to Princess Victoria.

From these suggestions it will be understood that Stamford is favourably situate as a starting-point for interesting excursions in various directions. In this sketchy indicative form will we leave them until time and circumstance shall enable us to travel in those parts and take notes at leisure. Meanwhile we must go back into Norfolk.

CHAPTER VIII.

A long Leap—Diss—Cross the Waveney—Suffolk—Hoxne—The Royal Martyr—Eye—Haughley—Shabby Carriages—Tricks on Travellers—Traces of Abbot Sampson—Woolpit—Bury St Edmund's—A Gentlemanly Town—The Abbey Gatehouse—Ruins and Architecture—The Botanic Garden—Relics—River Lark—Abbot Sampson's Bridge—The Abbot's Willow—The Barons' Oak—St Edmund's Shrine—The Reliques—A Prospect—Abbot Sampson's Judgment-Hall—Ickworth—Bloomfield's Home and Haunts—Norman Bell-tower—The Abbot's Reception—The Churchyard—St Mary's Church—Mary Tudor—Edmund Calamy—The Jews' House—Defoe—Famous Scholars.

We take a long leap from Stamford to Norwich; not to tarry, but to journey at the speed of the train a stage into Suffolk on our homeward route, and so begin to fill up the gap that we have so long left between the Lea and the Waveney. On this route and for some days to come we shall see no wild wastes of heath, or swampy flats; nothing but fields and farms whichever way we look; ancient halls, suggestive in some instances of famous names; old homesteads that date from the feudal times; quiet towns, and rustic villages. While stopping at Diss, on the edge of the county, we remember that John Skelton, "the King's orator and poet-laureat," was once rector of that place, and we notice signs of change in the landscape, for

Norfolk will soon be left behind; and considering whither we are going it seems but natural to think about Abbot Sampson's monks, two of whom were "of Dice." A little beyond the station we 'cross the Waveney—here a mere brook, and enter Suffolk. A few miles down the narrow stream lies the village of Hoxne—the name still spelt in the old Saxon way, and pronounced Hoxen,—where geologists find ancient flint weapons in the gravel-pits, or, to use their term, in the drift: tongue-shaped pieces of flint once used as axes by wild heathen tribes, whose wooden helves have long since perished; and now used by scientific debaters to point their great argument on the antiquity of man. Hereabouts did the East Angles find the head and headless body of their king and martyr, St Edmund; and here the corpse lay buried in a little chapel for years before Beodric's-worth received it and acquired the name of St Edmundsbury. Presently as the train moves on, we pass far on the left, Broome Hall, formerly the residence of "Tippoo" Cornwallis; and a little farther, Eye, once an island in a marsh, where fragments of old boats have been dug up, and where Leland saw St Felix's Book of the Gospels; a manuscript written in Lombard characters, known to antiquaries as the Red Book of Eye. To balance this with a modern fact, let us notice that there is at Eye, a well-built and well-conducted rettory, or flax-dressing establishment which 'turns out' ten tons of fine flax fibre weekly. The business is steady, for in recent years Suffolk farmers have found it advantageous to vary their rotation of crops with a season of flax; and so the mill is kept going.

At Haughley junction we 'change' to the Bury line, and to the shabbiest of all the shabby carriages invented by Shoreditch for the transport of East Anglian passengers. "Are you all seconds?" inquired a porter complacently while waiting to slam the door. "Judging from the carriage," I answered, "we are not even thirds;" whereat he and others laughed as if the joke had been a good one. So far as my experience goes, railway passengers find less consideration in these Eastern Counties than even in Staffordshire. But what can be expected in a district where speed, convenience, and punctuality are not regarded as important? Arriving one Sunday evening at Chappel on the Colne Valley line, I found the only carriage for eleven passengers was a luggage-van with two chairs in it.

But the day is sunshiny, and soon the cry "Elmswell" reminds us of another passage of Jocelin's chronicle, and how cleverly Abbot Sampson outwitted the Bishop of Ely, and disappointed him of the prime timber trees of Elmsett belonging to St Edmund. "Thus art is deceived by art," says Jocelin with a professional laugh. The socages belonging to the Abbot, and churches to the abbey, and the knight's fees, are thickly sprinkled hereabouts. Indeed, to one who has read *Past and Present*, the whole neighbourhood is suggestive. Sampson's painful and perilous journey to Rome disguised as a Scotchman was undertaken because of Woolpit church falling vacant: there stands the church about a mile to the left. A few miles farther, and a passing glimpse of a fragment of a ruin on the roadside beneath the embankment indicates

our arrival within the 'liberties' of Bury St Edmund's, described by some topographers as the Montpellier of England.

A few thatched houses in the mean street by which we enter the town somewhat disappoint expectation; but as we go farther to the market-place and principal thoroughfares, and down Angel Hill to the ecclesiastical precinct, the first impression is removed. Though quiet, and with a population exceeding thirteen thousand by fewer hundreds than in 1851, it is not a dull place; it looks respectable, and as if it might claim to be, as some visitors say, "a gentlemanly town." The soil is dry, with an inclination towards the morning sun; and from the foot of the slope to the brink of the little river Lark there spreads one of the most interesting recreation-grounds in the kingdom.

The Abbey gatehouse, flanked by long lengths of old gray ivy-crested wall, rises before us with imposing effect as we emerge from a narrow street: fit entrance to what was one of the proudest abbeys in the realm. And there beyond the wall to the right stand the magnificent Norman bell-tower, and St Mary's church, so that we have here a concentration of ruins, first-rate architecture, and historical associations of rare interest within a limited area. The great arch-way and a sixpenny fee admit us to the Botanic Garden—for to that excellent use have the abbey grounds been converted,—a large space admirably laid out, with trees, shrubs, flowers, and broad green lawns conducing to the general charm. Here and there fragments of walls, hoary with age, peer up from the sward. Many relics of stone and iron have been dug up in course

of years, which are preserved in one of the retired horticultural buildings,—rusty keys, and curious odds and ends, and morsels of sculpture: a museum of local antiquities. At the farther end a slow, sedgy stream crosses the grounds, making a gleamy vista under the shadow of the trees—the Lark, a tributary of the Ouse; and where it leaves the inclosure we see the low stone bridge which was built by Abbot Sampson. Near the opposite corner lingers the Abbot's willow, a decrepit tree said to be as old as the bridge. Thence we cross a meadow, where more of the broken walls appear, to a private garden—freely opened to visitors by Mr Muskett the proprietor,—where rock-work, and carved stones, bases of great columns, and ruinous corners of the towers of St Edmund's church—the church in which Sampson preached in the Norfolk dialect—overgrown with ivy, are carefully preserved, and well worth preserving, for as we read on a stone tablet fixed below the tall climbing ivy—*Near this spot on the 20th November, A.D.* 1215, *Cardinal Langton and the Barons swore at St Edmund's altar that they would obtain from King John the ratification of Magna Charta.* Another tablet enumerates the twenty-five Barons who took part in the oath, in three columns, one giving the name, the second the title, the third that of the present representatives. Among them stands Bohun, once the proudest of names; but which we shall find dwindled down to very common use in the adjoining county.

Here we may saunter about for hours thinking of the Abbot and his practical reforms; about his monks and their murmurings; of the learned monks, John

Lydgate, and Boston of Bury; the kings and other great personages who have tarried here or paid their homage at St Edmund's shrine, to which troops of pilgrims were wont to resort; for were not miracles wrought thereat? a shrine covered with plates of gold, which no man dared disturb, even to aid the ransom of Richard Lion-heart. Who would dare molest the resting-place of a saint who resented molestation? Did not King Sweyn die declaring himself stricken by St Edmund?

We find a contrast to these marvels in the report of the commissioners who visited the religious houses in 1539. "Amongst the reliques," they say, "we founde moche vanitie and superstition: as the coles that St Lawrence was tosted withal; the paryng of St Edmund's naylls; St Thomas of Canterbery's penneknyff and his bootes; and divers skulls for the head-ache; peces of the Holie Cross able to make a hole crosse; of other reliques for rayne, and certaine other superstitious usages; for avoiding of weeds growing in corn, with such other."

A view of the grounds from the top of the gate-house is an agreeable finish to our perambulation therein. We mount the winding stair, and pass through the chamber where Abbot Sampson used to sit in judgment. Our eye is first attracted by the gay flower-beds, and we can but admire the taste with which their whole plan is made to appear in one great circle of many-coloured beauty: a brilliant example of floral harmony and contrast. Then gazing afar we see to the south Hardwick House, the seat of the Cullums, and the Marquis of Bristol's flat-domed mansion, at

Ickworth; to the right lies Great Saxham, where dwelt John Eldred, whose early travel to Tripoli and Babylon is chronicled by Hakluyt. Northwards lies Fornham St Genevieve, where the Earl of Leicester with his Flemish mercenaries was routed in 1173; and beyond is the country of Bloomfield: Honington, his birthplace; Sapiston, where he began to be a Farmer's Boy; Fakenham, where the ghost walked; Euston, the scene of some of his poems; and Troston, the residence of his patron, Capel Lofft. There too is Stow Langtoft, the seat of Sir Simonds D'Ewes, whose name we have all read in the annals of the Long Parliament. Taken with its associations the gently undulating landscape all around is far from unpleasing.

We descend from the roof to visit that grand Norman tower which, standing at the entrance to the large churchyard adjoining, has attracted our eye from time to time. Its height, eighty-six feet, massive proportions and severe details, all praiseworthily restored and displayed, render it highly interesting as a specimen of the architecture of the time when it was built by Abbot Baldwin, within thirty years after the Conquest. The receding doorway with its numerous mouldings is as rich a feast for the eye as the one at Tutbury. The tower is now used as a bell-tower; but the monks distinguished it as "the great gate of the church of St Edmund." And here it was that they received Sampson, who had gone forth following his twelve companions afar off, "carrying about his neck a little box, in which was contained the letters of the convent—as if he alone was the servant of them all—and without an esquire, bearing his frock looped under his elbows,"

and who returned to them as abbot. Here they received him "with great solemnity, with ringing of bells inside the choir and without." Here, "encompassed by a multitude of men, he dismounted from his horse outside the threshold of the gate, and causing his shoes to be taken off, was received bare-footed, the prior and sacrist on each side conducting him. We, on our parts," says Jocelin, "chanted the responses, *Benedictus Dominus*, in the office of the Trinity." We cannot help sympathizing with the incident, though removed from it by more than seven centuries, because the obscure monk proved to be the right man in the right place, as is made clear to us by his chronicler and Thomas Carlyle.

The churchyard into which we enter is the place where miracle-plays were held, and the sports and wrestlings which grew so outrageous that Abbot Sampson forbad them. In one portion of the ground—the *cemeterium fratrum*—skeletons and small leaden crosses have been dug up. Notwithstanding its memorials of mortality, the churchyard is a pleasant place for a stroll: an avenue of leafy limes makes a soothing rustling, and the ivy-covered ruins of the chapel of the charnel, built by Abbot Northwold in 1301, to contain the bones "indecently cast forth" to make room for fresh burials, add a touch of the picturesque. On one side St Mary's church attracts the eye; on the other a part of the old abbey buildings, now restored and occupied as a private residence, presents a curious effect: old weather-worn walls, with tufts of grass growing from the chinks, modern chimneys, and windows with modern blinds and shutters. And in front stands the

Athenæum, contrasting strangely with the Norman and Gothic architecture across the way.

On seeing St Mary's church you will perhaps say that if Bury possessed no other attraction, it alone would amply repay your journey. The style is Perpendicular, with some remains of an earlier tower, a north porch, and many other features to be noted on the outside; and inside a chancel with wagon roof, a stair on each side leading to the rood-loft, and an almost bewildering variety of ornament. It is not a place for a hasty visit, for, with a good eye-glass to make out the details, you will find that hours may be spent in examination. The mere dimensions are imposing, so that whether we look at the magnificent west window of five lights, or the angels and multitude of other figures and grotesque carvings placed high aloft, there is much of astonishment mingled with our admiration. The open timber roof of the nave is considered by some judges as unequalled in any part of Europe. Each pendent-post rests on a carved figure; each hammer-beam, twenty-one on a side, bears an angel with outspread wings; and all the spandrils are filled with curious devices, in which you may discover the cognizance of kings and the badges of famous barons. The effect as you stand looking to the east, taking in the lofty chancel arch, with a light above representing the martyrdom of St Edmund, the window beyond, and the alternations of light and shade, is singularly impressive.

Among the tombs and tablets that suggest a pause, a tablet on the north wall of the chancel bears the name of Mary Tudor, third daughter of Henry

VII., whose first husband was Louis XII. of France, and who afterwards married Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk. An altar stone marked with five crosses covers the place to which her remains were transferred at the dissolution of the monastery. And among the names of eminent divines whose voice has been heard beneath this stately roof we will remember on departing that of Edmund Calamy. He preached here during ten years, winning much love and esteem; but resigned when the Royal order was enforced for reading the book of Sports and Pastimes.

St James's church is worth a visit; but we have had enough of matters ecclesiastical for the present, and it will be a relief to take a stroll and see whatever else the town contains of noteworthy. St John's Street has not yet lost its old name—Long Brackland, the Brakelond whence Jocelin the Chronicler takes his surname. Moyse's Hall, or the Jews' House, is an example of a Norman dwelling-house, with massive walls and vaulted ground-floor, which we may compare with the one we saw at Lincoln. It is now used as a police-station. In Abbey-Gate Street, Defoe, while a resident here, used to attend the preaching of the Nonconformist Samuel Bury. At King Edward's Grammar School in Northgate Street the author of *Icon Basilike* was a scholar, and Archbishop Sancroft, and Guildford, Lord Keeper, and of distinguished men in later days, including the present Lord Cranworth, not a few. Thinghow, an eminence on Northgate Road, retains the trace of Scandinavian customs, being the hill on which the Thing or public meetings were held: Moot Hill, as the Saxons called it. And near the Angel Hotel is a

house in which the boy Louis Philippe lodged while under the care of Madame de Genlis.

Besides all this there are old hospitals, out-lying ruins; traces of the town wall, and other antiquities to be discovered by a curious tourist with time at command.

CHAPTER IX.

A Walk before Supper—Little Welnetham—Bradfield Combust—Burial-place of Arthur Young—Farmfull Landscapes—Dwellers from the Conquest—Moated Houses—Bretenham—Bildeston—Hitcham—Rev. Professor Henslow—An Invitation—The Rectory—Scientific Ways and Means—The Village School—The Botanical Lesson—Dissections—Apt Dissectors—The Lecture—Hard Words made Easy—Chemistry of a Potato—Puzzling a Curate—The Rector's Plans, Prospects, and Reminiscences—Half-penny Specimens—Moral Aspects—What Hitcham was—Beginnings of Enlightenment—How to keep the Mind awake—Pig-headed Farmers—Allotments for Ever—Down with the Tithe Dinner—Holiday Excursions—A Silver Cup for the Rector—Incident in Kew Gardens—Flower Shows—Lecturets—Self-help Promoted—Good-night—A great Sorrow.

HITCHAM, about a dozen miles to the south-east of Bury, was the place I next wished to visit, and late in the afternoon I set out to walk thither by supper-time, quitting the high road as soon as possible for lanes and by-ways. From Little Welnetham (Weltham) the way led me between the Bradfield villages, and near to Bradfield Combust, of which Arthur Young's father was rector, and where the family to which he belonged had dwelt for more than two centuries. The old hall there was once burnt down, and ever since the place has been distinguished by the singular term Combust. It is a place which should be interesting to farmers,

for its quiet churchyard contains the tomb of the famous agriculturist who by his tours and his pen originated improvements in English farming which entitle him to rank as a public benefactor. A more rural resting-place he could not have desired.

The scenery is quiet; gentle undulations sprinkled here and there with copse and plantation, on which farm succeeds to farm, great breadths of grain for many a mile, presenting you with such a picture of Suffolk as would meet your eye in any part of the county. Though it has some features in common with Norfolk, you will not fail to note that St Edmund's county is more varied in surface and softer of aspect than its neighbour beyond the Waveney. For signs of rural ease and plenty there is no part of our island that contents the eye so fully as East Anglia; and there is withal so much that denotes settled habitation and long possession, as if the same homesteads had been inhabited by the same families ever since the days when the monks of Bury pruned their vines and harvested their barley. "We were here before the Conquest, and here we are now," might still be said by certain dwellers in Suffolk.

The ancient farm-houses have not yet disappeared. Two that I passed in the course of my walk stand amid gardens inclosed on two or three sides by a moat: a remnant of the feudal times, suggesting contrasts favourable to the present. The houses look picturesque with gray thatch and frequent gables; and the walls, as clean as whitewash can make them, testify to the prevalence of a wholesome virtue.

Brettenham, one of the villages on the route, is

supposed by some antiquaries to occupy the site of ancient Combretonium; a supposition favoured by the identity of the second syllable with the name of the little river Bret that flows by the village.

It was dark when I came to Hitcham. The public-house, being full of labourers, had no room for me, so, not thinking it fair to present myself at the rectory two hours after sunset, even with a letter of introduction, I walked on to *The Bull* at Bildeston, a mile and a half farther.

A pleasant and somewhat hilly landscape appeared as I returned next morning to Hitcham. Bildeston church stands on a bold height at some distance from the town, over-looking a fair prospect. Hitcham rectory, situate on a wooded eminence, appears to be completely hidden by foliage; but as I saw when up on the lawn, it has a view between the laburnums and sycamores across the vale to the little village and church of Hitcham on the opposite slope: one of those scenes which, as Cowper says, you may look at every day, and every day feel pleasure therein.

Those who were privileged to know the Reverend Professor Henslow will assume at once that my reception was all that I could have desired. The object of my visit was talked over while we sat at breakfast, and he, with his cheerful kindness anticipating my wishes, showed how very easy it would be for him to gratify them. He had arranged to give the first class of the village girls' school their annual treat on that day, by driving them to Bury, where a visit to the Botanic Garden and good entertainment would make them all happy. But if I could return to Hitcham on the

following Monday, which was his day for a botanical lesson to the school, I should then see how even rustic children could be led to take delight in botany as a science.

So when the Rector and his curate had driven the two light spring wagons and the glad lasses and their mistress from the door, I walked away by a cross-country route for a brief excursion into Essex.

On my return two days afterwards as I walked out of Hadleigh Station, I met the gardener, who had been sent from the rectory with the light spring wagon that had enhanced the pleasure of many a village holiday, to offer me a drive to Hitcham. And now with the day before me, I appreciated my privilege the more; for truly it was a privilege to visit Professor Henslow; to listen to the words of wisdom and instruction that fell from his lips, so free, genial, and familiar that a visitor might well be forgiven for fancying himself at home. Of the learned Professor and earnest preacher, nothing appeared save fulness of knowledge accompanied by a happy facility of illustration, and the charity that "thinketh no evil," wherein mirth and humour were pleasantly mingled.

Not in words alone was the fulness of knowledge manifested; for from basement to attic the house appeared as if the precept "Be not ignorant of anything in a great matter or a small," had there been literally fulfilled. Science was generously entertained with store of materials on which to establish her arguments and conclusions, and with almost numberless appliances for the imparting of her knowledge in simple form to minds learned and unlearned. Botany,

geology, and natural history seemed part of the furniture of the principal rooms; while on landings, in passages, and in bed-rooms all the spare corners were filled with illustrative specimens, apparatus, diagrams, and chemicals from floor to ceiling; all systematically arranged and labelled, and easy of access. The little chamber in which I slept was similarly garnished, and I marvelled not a little at such accumulated evidences of industry, good-will, and various accomplishments. Where had the Rector found time for so much work, in addition to professional lectures at Cambridge and pastoral duties in the village from which during more than fifteen years he was not one Sunday absent? He had indeed remembered that his flock had minds to be cultivated as well as souls to be saved.

But this is anticipating. The morning was occupied with preparations for the school-lecture: boxes filled with specimens of freshly-plucked plants, specimens of dried plants, of insects, a few simple landscape drawings, a spirit lamp and apparatus for a chemical experiment, were all made ready, and as soon luncheon was over the wagon appeared at the door for the conveyance of ourselves and the materials to the school, about a mile distant on the opposite hill.

A holiday could not have made the children appear happier than did the Rector's arrival; all eyes turned towards him as if sure of an answering look of sympathy. The apparatus was brought in, the botanical classes, including boys and girls, took their places, and the first course of plants was distributed; the easiest specimens to the third or youngest class. Each pupil then began to dissect the specimen, and placed the several

portions of the flower, as they were separated, on a small board prepared for the purpose with compartments ruled and labelled Pistils—Stamens—Corolla—Calyx, together with terms for the subordinate parts and for the complete description of the plant. The number of each of the parts composing the flower was thus clearly presented to the eye; but in some instances, as the Professor showed while examining the boards, the young learner had made a mistake by confounding one part with another, or by imperfect separation. The particulars of each dissection were then written out fairly on a slate; and it was to me a singularly interesting and instructive sight to see how intelligently those village children made use of true botanical terms. The third class, among whom sat little ones about eight years of age, dissected one specimen only; the second class did two; and the first, three specimens, each with a description. While these were going on the Professor made preparations for his lecture in the adjoining room, and after the first course of potato-blossoms, appointed me to distribute the elder-flowers and honeysuckle. The readiness with which some of the children made their dissections, and identified the character of the specimens, was remarkable, and would perhaps be scarcely credible by those who have never cultivated their faculty of observation.

Copying from one another was prevented by the simple arrangement of mixing the classes, so that no two children of any one class sat together, and if the thirds looked at what the first were doing, they saw what was to them an unintelligible exercise. Ere long the Professor came round to make his examination, and

correct the descriptions ; and while he spoke from time to time a word of approbation, or pointed out a mistake, and made the young student understand why it was a mistake, I could not help contrasting the "good man" imparting his knowledge and sharing his smile among humble rustics, with the learned Teacher who for many years lectured on botanical and mineralogical science in the ancient University of Cambridge.

Then a move was made into the class-room, where the seats were arranged one above another, so that all the pupils could see, and the lecture commenced with a few words about *Loniceranths*. This might seem to be a term better suited for college than the village school ; but, as the Professor has recorded, "in order to secure a beneficial result on the reasoning powers of children, we must not avoid the use of certain technical expressions, however pedantically unnecessary they may appear to persons unacquainted with their importance, and unaccustomed to their use." The children appeared to be familiar with it; moreover those who had dissected the elder and honeysuckle had described them as *Loniceranths*. Presently *Solananths* was mentioned, which in like manner presented no difficulty even to the youngest, for they knew that among this class of plants the potato was included ; they had just dissected the flower, and could tell its characteristics. There was much to be said on this topic ; dried specimens of other species, native and exotic, hanging up in full view were pointed out, and when in explaining them any new word or new botanical term was used, the classes were called on to repeat it aloud. "They remember it better," said the Professor to me afterwards, "for exercising

their tongues with it as well as their ears." The illustrative specimens comprised the *Datura*, or thorn-apple, henbane, and nightshade; hence it will be easy to infer that the knowledge imparted did not lack variety, though referring to one special subject. Not a word was spoken that the children did not understand; they were made to see as clearly as Linnæus himself could have desired, the connection between the examples and the proposition they were intended to exemplify; and the lively conversational style held them with its unfailing charm. For my part, I shall not soon forget the incidents of that Monday of July, 1860; never before had I heard such a rendering of natural phenomena and scientific facts clear and intelligible to the apprehension of children. The same style and method would have won the attention of a cultivated audience. When at the Prince Consort's request Professor Henslow gave a course of lectures on botany to the Royal Family he, as he told me, did little more than repeat the lectures which had informed the understanding of the village school.

The brief description of the *Datura* and its properties led naturally to mention of a weed bearing the same name, which, if sought, would be found in gardens round about Hitcham. I saw some of the elder pupils exchange glances at this, as if to signify their intention of speedily discovering the Suffolk *Datura*. Then the potato was talked about, and the old familiar esculent became the medium of a wide range of novel information. In one hundred pounds of potatoes, twenty-six pounds only were solid matter, all the rest was water; and a comparison was made between the

root and a hundred pounds of beef. That solid matter could be eaten, as all the school knew; it could be converted into artificial sago and tapioca, and a specimen of each preparation was exhibited. If boiled with sulphuric acid, it formed a gum, in appearance something like gum arabic, which was much used in manufactures, and was called dextrine; and the nature and uses of dextrine were explained. By further boiling sugar could be produced, and from this sugar brandy could be distilled. It was the starch of the potato which was convertible into all these different substances; the starch could be separated from the other part of the solid matter, which might be called the woody part. This woody part, besides helping to fill the stomach when eaten, could be moulded into various forms for use, and an embossed box was shown, made of potato pulp. Diseased potatoes were not to be thrown away as useless; for the disease did not affect the starch, and it was possible to separate the starch, as would be shown by and by.

Then *Orobancanths* were taken up, and with as much simple elucidation as the other species; a dried specimen of the broom-rape was shown as an example, and its habit of living on other plants was made the point of an incidental moral. A field of clover, for instance, would look promising; but when the roots grew large the broom-rape sent out suckers which attached themselves to the clover roots, and sucked out their nourishment. Another kind preyed on growing hemp; another on ivy; and another, which was the largest, on furze; and as the two latter were to be met with in Hitcham

parish, the young botanists were recommended to look out for them.

Then a specimen was shown of a large caterpillar, and the children were told that if they would search among the leaves and stalks of their fathers' potato-plots, they would find some of the same kind living. "Bring them with you to the school," said the lecturer, taking up another object from the table, "and we will keep them to see whether they change into such a moth as this, which is called the death's-head moth."

Then came the conclusion; a practical one, which excited no little admiration among the spectators. The Professor scraped a potato into a rough pulp which fell into a sieve; where, small quantities of water being poured on from time to time, it was rubbed through. Presently the basin underneath was half full of a fluid that looked like poor gruel; this was poured into a small tin saucepan, and placed over a spirit lamp. While the heat was producing its effect, the woody innutritious part of the potato left in the sieve was shown to them; and the classes were reminded of something that had been said during the lecture of the hardening effect of lime, and a bone was exhibited as an example of the effect in one of its forms, contrasted with a similar bone which, having lost all its lime by soaking in muriatic acid, could be squeezed and bent as if it were india-rubber. Then the steam rising from the saucepan showed that the experiment had succeeded; the little vessel was lifted from the lamp, and soon all eyes saw the small quantity of starch that lay in the bottom.

And so the lecture ended. If I could but have suc-

ceeded in reproducing it here with anything like its original effect; its mastery of details; its abundance of illustration; its touches of humour, and the power by which it elevated the understanding of children to its full significance, you would pronounce this, good-natured reader, to be the most interesting chapter of my book. As it is, all that I have done is to sketch very imperfectly, one of the means by which a dark corner of the earth received enlightenment.

I no longer wondered at the quantity of apparatus which had been prepared, for an apt occasion had arisen for the use of every article. All was replaced in the wagon, and with a "heap" of exercises which were to be examined, we returned to the vicarage. Three or four little girls, whom we packed into corners and crevices, intending to put them out on the way, showed me that they knew something of botany by naming plants growing on the banks, and telling me which was *Rosa canina*, and which *Rosa rubiginosa*, as we passed the full-flowering wild rose-bushes that adorned the hedges. The curate told me that on his first coming to Hitcham, the young botanists puzzled him not a little with, "Please, sir, is this a monocotyledon or a dicotyledon?" and such like questions.

Dinner was no sooner over than the Professor sat down to examine the heap of exercises, written on slates, which we had brought from the school, all representing work done by the children at home in the interval between the last two Monday lectures. They comprised descriptions of plants, accompanied by specimens in number, according to capacity; thus each pupil of the

first class prepared three descriptions and three specimens; of the second class two, and of the third one. The specimen might be, perhaps, only a withered scrap; still it sufficed "to show that the plant had been really obtained."

Correcting the exercises and writing remarks at foot of the slates did not interrupt our conversation, which embraced the Rector's plans, results, reminiscences, and prospects. He thought there was no other natural science which would so well answer the purpose of cultivating the faculty of observation as botany; for the materials at command were so numerous and various that years would pass before all could be studied; they cost no money; were easily accessible; and in their periodical growth, bloom, and decay, they inspired such pleasure and interest, that the study always proved inviting, whether to children or adults. And the moral consequences were beneficial; the children learned how to institute comparisons, and exercise judgment; they acquired orderly habits, inattention being checked by small fines. The loss of a schedule, for example, entailed the loss of a mark, and the preparation of a blank form by the loser. To guard against accidents, the young students were supplied with, or shown how to make, a sort of brown paper portfolio, in which the schedules could be kept clean, and out of risk of being considered by any tidy mother as litter proper for fire-lighting. Another advantage was, the pecuniary resource which some of the children found in botany, by collecting and drying specimens of plants, which they sold for a halfpenny each, to the botanical

students at Cambridge, who were glad to purchase such ready appliances for scientific investigation. "The public are not at all aware," says the Professor, writing on this subject,* "of the traffic carried on by a few collectors who dry specimens in different parts of the world, charging about sixpence a species for them; neither have they any notion of the importance of extensive Herbaria to the few eminent men who have made botany a life occupation; devoting time, thought, and talent of no mean order, to the advance of a science whose ultimate aim is to improve our knowledge of the laws which regulate the conditions under which both plants and animals flourish in health, languish under disease, and fade away after death."

In the course of our conversation, I inquired whether any of the children continued to study botany after leaving school. The answer was that some endeavoured to increase their knowledge; but the most, owing to circumstances, could not be expected to do more than remember what they had learned, finding therein, as might be hoped, a lasting source of mental recreation. No field, path, or highway, could be uninteresting to those who knew the names of plants, and how to describe them; and if a boy had ambition to become a gardener, his knowledge of botany would be an important element in his favour. At times letters were received from some of the girls, who had become domestic servants in Ipswich and other places, inclosing perhaps a specimen of a plant which they could not classify, and soliciting information; and in some in-

* Illustrations to be employed in Practical Lessons on Botany. Price Sixpence. Published by Chapman and Hall.

stances, the writers lamented their want of opportunity for larger study. These letters were always answered.

It might be thought that a place which yielded such excellent results had some superiority to start with. But judging from what the Rector told me as we talked while the evening waned, a more benighted parish than Hitcham once was could hardly have been found in East Anglia. At the time of his presentation to the rectory in 1837 the population numbered one thousand, and the poor-rate amounted to twenty-seven shillings a year for each individual. This fact alone implies little morality and less conscience. The ignorance of the rustic population was an opprobrium to Christianity; they had no recreations, and in their relations with the farmers were little better than serfs. Some of the old men remembered a cricket and football ground which once belonged to the village; but it had long been lost, perhaps by the process of inclosure. The labourers had to content themselves with the public-house as the farmers with the annual tithe-dinner. I have seen in North Oxfordshire a village where, as good local authority informs me, "the habitual recreation of the villagers is fornication." Whether the same prevailed in Hitcham, I do not know; certain it is, that chastity was very rare; that the first child was commonly born six months after wedlock. The occasion of these births was regarded by the lovers as a sort of betrothal under the influence of which the woman remained faithful to one man.

In 1839 Mr Henslow entered into residence in Hitcham and took immediate measures for raising his flock from their brutal degradation. He had to gain their confidence; to lead them to regard him as their

friend, as one who cared for them, and he knew full well that mere preaching would not suffice to gain his ends. If he could amuse them and excite their faculty of wonder to begin with, they would perhaps be led in time to listen to a word of advice about household matters and moral duty. Accordingly, being an expert in the pyrotechnic art, he invited the villagers to displays of fireworks, all prepared with his own hands, on the rectory lawn, and astonished them by a spectacle such as they had never before witnessed. What a subject to talk about! The man who had taken so much pains to entertain them had some claim to a hearing when he showed them a few simple domestic utensils, and explained their use; and while the villagers were familiarizing themselves with these rudiments of domestic propriety and comfort, he caused a school-room to be built, and appointed a mistress to begin a siege against ignorance, which might have seemed as hopeless as it was certain to be laborious. The labour was, however, somewhat lightened from the very outset by rendering it such as interested the children, and gradually won their sympathies. Religious knowledge and the knowledge which embraces common things went hand in hand; duty to parents and to one another was shown to be an essential part of a higher duty which partook of godliness and cleanliness, followed with other decencies of habit and conversation.

But it is one thing to rouse mental faculties and another to keep them awake. Let the mind have some one fit source of occupation on which it can exercise itself, and we may expect a development of a power of observation and of reasoning, combined with more or

less of activity which under less favourable circumstances might have remained dormant. Hence it was that Professor Henslow introduced the study of botany into the school at Hitcham; thereby adding a thousandfold to their educational resources, and inspiring them with reverent admiration for the operations of Nature even in their commonest forms. He had the happiness to see his desire gratified: that village children could be trained as botanists not only without detriment to other parts of their education, but with manifest benefit. And more: the merits of his process were recognized by enlightened individuals in many parts of the kingdom, who made trial of the process in their own neighbourhood, and now, having been taken up by the Committee of Council on Education, it will be widely extended and more widely appreciated.

Having opened this promising course for the children, Professor Henslow proceeded with his measures for improving the condition of their fathers and mothers. He introduced ploughing-matches; but while the labourers rejoiced over opportunity for showing their skill, the farmers opposed the innovation, viewing with grim suspicion any measure which seemed likely to lessen their power over the men. In like manner, or perhaps with greater animosity, they had on a former occasion set themselves against the Rector's proposal to introduce the allotment system; and persisting in their pig-headed opposition, fancied themselves the stronger. The contest was renewed at intervals during ten years, the Rector not once losing his temper or an opportunity for conciliation; yet when the circumstances required he could rebuke and admonish with severity, as the farmers

were made to feel. Invigorated, as it seemed, by the opposition to the ploughing-matches, he recommenced his agitation in favour of allotments, declaring himself a supporter of the rights of the poor, and upholding as one among these rights full liberty to occupy a small parcel of land. He carried his point, after a hard struggle, and in 1849, fifty allotments of a quarter-acre each were established in the parish of Hitcham: and persevering against the prolonged opposition he ultimately added to the number. At the time of my visit there were one hundred and thirty-six quarter-acre allotments held by as many labourers, each paying a rent of twelve shillings and sixpence annually. Their usual plan of cultivation is to grow one-third wheat, one-third potatoes, and one-third vegetables of different kinds, reserving the little garden by the cottage for flowers. One argument put forward by the farmers was that a man who cultivated an allotment could not do a fair day's work for his master. But after the first digging of the plot, which occupies the spare time of a fortnight, the labour becomes comparatively light. The second digging takes but three days; and after that the wife and children can do most of the work. The men take pride in their plots, and nearly all are ambitious of showing the best cultivation. Many who were timid and mistrustful at first were heard to say when the crops—their own crops—were gathered, "whatever should we do now 'uthout the 'lotments?"

In that same year, 1849, Professor Henslow made known to the farmers that instead of the usual tithe-dinner, which had been an annual scene of gorge and guzzle at a public-house, he would expend a sum equal

to the cost of the dinner in giving an excursion to those among his parishioners whose conduct had been the most praiseworthy. It was a bold experiment and eminently successful, for from that small beginning—a trip of but a few miles—arose a series of annual excursions to which the whole village looked forward as their happiest holiday. The cost of the tithe-dinner, supplemented by gifts from the Rector's family, from sympathizing friends and subscriptions from the villagers themselves, formed a Recreation Fund, which really justified its name. Excursions were undertaken to Harwich and Felixstow, where some of the rustics beheld the sea for the first time; to Ipswich, where the Museum which had been planned and arranged by Professor Henslow in such a way as to render it a model of its kind, was perhaps the most interesting of the objects visited, for as they paced the rooms the Professor interested and instructed them by his happy explanations. Without him, indeed, the excursions would have lacked their principal charm. He planned all the arrangements beforehand, and in some instances printed a sketch of the route, which the rustics could use while on the journey, and preserve as a reminiscence of what they had seen. In time, places yet more distant were visited by his parties of nearly two hundred rustics, men, women, and children: Norwich, Cambridge, Kew Gardens, and the Great Exhibition of 1851; and in no single instance did misconduct occur to blemish the recollections of the holiday, or make the Professor ashamed. Even the farmers could not but recognize the change for the better in those once abject labourers, and after the Cambridge excursion they presented him with a silver

cup in token of their respect and admiration. Happy must the Rector have been at this evidence that Christian life and example had not failed of their hopeful result.

At the visit to Kew, above-mentioned, while the Rector was leading his villagers round the gardens, and explaining objects in his usual clear and interesting style, a small party of other visitors joined the throng, to have the benefit, as they said, "of that very intelligent gardener's explanations." So they followed, keeping within earshot, and heard all that was then discoursed about plants and flowers; and so much were they gratified that at the close one of the party slipped a shilling into the Rector's hand.

A whole book would be required to set forth Professor Henslow's beneficent works amply as they deserve, reflecting a light derived from the source to which the purest motives aspire; and in such a way as I hope may yet be done by some true-hearted biographer.* For my part, I can only add a few particulars more of our evening's conversation. Still further to promote a habit of self-reliance and independence, Professor Henslow introduced and established a Wife's Society—a Coal Club—a Children's Clothing Club—a Medical Club, and a Loan Fund; and these grave matters were relieved from time to time by a village festival, which comprised shows of flowers, fruit, and vegetables, specimens of good cultivation, of honey,

* Since this chapter was written, a *Memoir* of Prof. Henslow has been published by the Rev. L. S. Jenyns, in a goodly octavo volume.

and other rural produce. Competitors came from neighbouring places; prizes were given, and it was generally remarked that the most successful were among the Hitcham allottees. The best nosegay of wild flowers even would gain a prize, as rustic taste was thereby encouraged. And the attractions of the shows were multiplied by amusements on the rectory lawn, animated by the presence of the Rector, who showed how much of instruction might be blended with amusement by his occasional "lecturets" on interesting objects, and cheerful conversation. Many a villager will remember for years to come the words of wisdom that fell from his lips when the hour of separation arrived, and when, after singing the National Anthem in full chorus, the gathering broke up, and cottagers went to their homes in the summer twilight.

In all this there was no coddling of poor folk into helplessness, or manifestation of patronage. The horticultural shows were what they purported to be: voluntary exhibitions by producers emulous to display their best. There was no attempt to get up a spectacle for personal glory, as is too often the case; no solicitation of cultivators to send in something "to oblige his Lordship." Rustic capability there demonstrated itself as a pregnant fact to the exhibitors themselves as well as to visitors. Even in small matters of detail the sharers in Professor Henslow's projects were not made to suffer in their self-respect; being required to pay for the printed tables, little books, or other things needful in the working of his measures. The payment in most instances did not exceed a halfpenny; but the

article had been bought, the buyer appreciated it the more, and lost none of his independence. The wisdom of this proceeding will commend itself to the sympathy of every wise reader.

Answering my inquiry as to the whole sum of results, Professor Henslow did not claim for his flock the character of model Christians; imperfections still prevailed in the face of obvious moral and material improvement; births of children out of wedlock had not entirely ceased; and some of the labourers and farmers, not yet reconciled to the new order of things, would like to see the tithe-dinner restored with its drunken bout of twenty-four hours' duration. And certain of the farmers, who "don't see any good in lettin' the children have such a lot o' schoolin'," deny employment to parents who refuse to withdraw their children from school.

The attendance at church was satisfactory, and the people took pleasure in the singing, to which they had been trained by the playing of one of the Professor's daughters on the organ. In church the men and women sit apart, on opposite sides, except in two or three pews occupied by the leading farmers. When the horticultural tea-parties were first held the men and women sat together; but at the third or fourth gathering the men all seated themselves at one table, leaving the women to occupy the other; and they kept up the separation on all subsequent occasions.

It was late when the Professor rose to show me to my bed-room, and the talk ceased to which I could have

sat listening all night. He paused now and then as we went up-stairs, and made a few remarks on certain of his specimens: how one had come into his possession in a curious way; another had proved singularly useful in illustrating a variety of subjects; another had always put the spectators into good humour, and so forth. We shook hands on saying good-night, for I intended to start early on the morrow before the family were up.

Silence is golden, says the proverb. We apprehend the full significance thereof when far away from busy thoroughfares, in some lone hamlet situate amid a "thousand fields." Sweet and soothing as well as golden is the silence there; but on this occasion it seemed to me that the silence was eloquent, as all that I had heard and seen during the day came again before me in mental pictures or thoughtful words. I opened the window to let in the gentle wind, and lay for a while thinking of what had been done for Hitcham. Enviable villagers! would they prove capable of yet further improvement. Little did I foresee the great sorrow that was ere long to fall upon them.

Ten months after my visit a funeral procession paced slowly from the rectory to the village churchyard; and there with simplest rites, in obedience to his own request, the pastor was laid in the grave by the hands of those among whom he had for the space of twenty-four years so faithfully laboured. His age was sixty-five.

A few months later I read in print concerning Hitcham, that by reason of the bereavement religion

would have a better chance in the parish than before. What an amiable sentiment! Religion probably may have a better chance, whatever that may happen to mean; but I take leave to doubt whether real, practical Christianity will; except in so far as fruit appears from the seed so diligently sown by the excellent Professor of Botany. Long may he be held in affectionate remembrance, for

"His hand was ever unto good."

CHAPTER X.

Walk to Hadleigh—Colchester—Troops for India—Uproar and Fighting—An Arrival—An Exploration—Birth-place of Constantine—The Nymph's Appeal—Giants—St Botolph's Priory—The Castle—St John's Gate—Ugly Camp—The Roman Wall—In Memoriam—By Omnibus—Estuary of the Colne—Mersey Island—Touches of Dialect—Wheeley—Thorpe-le-Soken—Kirby—Walton on the Naze—Its Aspects and Habits—A Lobster, Sir!—Frinton Church—The Lighthouse—Off to the Steamer—A windy Voyage—Harwich—A dull Town—The Packet Port—The Ferry—A growl at the Wind—Walton Ferry—Felixstow—Short Commons—Saltmarsh and Sand—Terraces in the Future Tense—Bernard Barton's Fairyland—Coprolites—Estuary of the Deben—Orfordness—Wading against the Wind—Landguard Fort—A Dangerous Tongue—The Encampment—Ferry-House Dinner—A hard Row—Atalanta—Up the Orwell—Ipswich.

Before eight the next morning I had walked six miles to Hadleigh, the burial-place of Guthrum the Dane. It is a quiet little town with a long wide street of low white-washed houses, among which springs up here and there a gable from a panel of flower-work fashioned of plaster in relief, and supported by prominent brackets; whereby an aspect is produced which reminds us of the days when Doctor Rowland Taylor was burnt to death on the neighbouring common, for the ease of Queen Mary's conscience and the encouragement of Papistry.

From Hadleigh I journeyed by rail to Colchester. Just as I arrived a detachment of troops for India came marching down from the camp, followed by all the trulls of the town, the band playing *Auld lang syne;* and then ensued a scene which would perhaps have gratified and consoled those old officers who go about deploring the over-education of the army. Such brutal behaviour and brutal talk I never before witnessed or heard; and because of the usual unpunctuality which has become the opprobrium of railway travelling, there was plenty of time while the train was kept waiting for the uproar to grow into a fierce fight. One of the men, very unwilling to depart, dashed his fists through the thick glass of the carriage windows; raged like a tiger, and was over-mastered only after a severe struggle, during which one of the corporals got a blow that made his cheek look like raw liver. The fighter was handcuffed and marched back to head-quarters. Amid all the confusion I noticed one solitary touch of sentiment. A man who had come down from the camp shook hands with his comrade in the carriage; then partly concealing himself behind a pillar, stood gazing on the other with tearful eyes until the train rolled away. English civilization, I thought, would not be very favourably represented among the Hindoos and Buddhists by such emissaries as those.

The next down train brought the friend in whose company I had planned to visit Colchester. The town situate on a hill appears to advantage from the railway, and enjoys thereby free air and prospects over the vale of the Colne. As we crossed the river and walked up the ascent our anticipations were lively of things to be

seen and associations revived in a town that had begun its history in the days of King Coel; was the stronghold of Claudius, and a leading Roman colony under the name of Camulodunum, of which the walls still survive in a ruinous state; the residence of Helena and birth-place of Constantine the Great; that well-nigh perished in the fierce revolt of the Iceni, but still retains much of the original Roman impress in the arrangement of its streets. The old walls had to endure other assaults in the decisive days when Goring and Fairfax battled for possession of the castle that still crowns the height where Edward the Elder once built a fortress; and one of the churches which has been mutilated still bears testimony to the destructive effects of Fairfax's guns. And besides all this, the town claims consideration because it has among its possessions a so-called Saxon tower; the tomb of the two Royalist officers who were shot for their resolute defence; a good museum of antiquities; the broadest and handsomest street in the county; and a town-hall in which the corporation eat their annual oyster-feast.

By way of variety let us hear what the nymph "Coln," addressing the other rivers of Essex, says, in Drayton's lines—

"What, is there nothing here, that you esteem of worth,
That our big-bellied sea, or our rich land brings forth?
Think you our oysters here unworthy of your praise?
Pure Walfleet, which do still the daintiest palates please:
Or cheese, which our fat soil to every quarter sends;
Whose tack the hungry clown, and ploughman so commends.
If you esteem not these, as things above the ground,
Look under, where the urns of ancient times are found;

The Roman emp'rors' coins, oft digg'd out of the dust,
And warlike weapons now consumed with cankering rust;
The huge and massy bones of mighty fearful men,
To tell the world's full strength, what creatures livèd then;
When in her height of youth, the lusty fearful earth
Brought forth her big-limb'd brood, even giants in their birth."

The giants, as geologists proved long ago, were not "mighty fearful men," but mammoths and other primeval animals whose bones are still dug up from time to time on Lexden heath in the neighbourhood, and become subjects for discussion at the Geological Society.

In our stroll from church to church we paused longest at St Botolph's Priory; a Norman ruin very remarkable as exemplifying the liberal use which the builder of the original edifice made of the Roman bricks and tiles of old Camulodunum. The colour of the hard red brick so much prevails as to contrast with the flint and rubble which occur in places, and to heighten the beautiful effect of the overhanging masses of ivy. Seen through the breaks in the dark green foliage the redness appears to gleam.

Some other of the churches and the castle show also that Roman relics were regarded as useful building materials. We rambled about the castle, from the lower vaults where men were bottling bitter ale, to the top of the walls, which are thick enough for a safe pathway, and to support a stout vigorous oak that grows on the south-west angle.

St John's Gate is now the entrance to a large nursery-garden, within which once stood a Benedictine Abbey; but where nothing of masonry remains except some outbuildings useful now for gardening purposes;

and a long range of the old inclosing walls. The Gate reminded me of gates at Norwich and Norfolk church-towers, for it combines flint and stone pleasingly arranged, with touches of Norman and Perpendicular style, and crocketted pinnacles, from which the distinguishing term — Pinnacle Gardens — for the grounds within has doubtless been derived.

We walked up to the camp, where some of the officers lounging at the door of their mess amused themselves by setting a dog at us. The site is open and dry; but the whole aspect of the place with the rows of sombre-coloured huts was so distressingly ugly that we seemed to lose the effect of the bright sunshine until we had descended to the meadows and refreshed our eyes with a sight of the old Roman wall: the wall against which Iceni and Trinobantes had rushed in furious storm.

Gray with the lapse of centuries this venerable relic is much broken and fallen to decay. Large portions have entirely disappeared, and nowhere does it appear so firm and solid as the Northumbrian wall, except by the old guardhouse. Nevertheless, it was interesting employment for us to trace it through the meadows and gardens that engirdle the town; across the Balkon hill and along the lanes, and here and there in out-of-the-way places. And this accomplished, we finished our exploration with a quiet walk along the bank of the Colne.

With my recollections of that glad sunshiny day there now mingles a dark shadow; for the friend whose presence so much enhanced my own pleasure

has since been laid in the grave. I had known Alexander Gilchrist from his boyhood; and while he grew up into his comely manhood, had witnessed the growth of his mind and the fruition of his early promise. Very gratifying was it to see such an outcome of his painstaking as a student; of his diligent gathering of facts, and the conscientiousness with which he formed his opinions. His sympathy with art and antiquity and the extent of his knowledge imparted interest to his conversation at all times, and especially so when we were in quest of relics of the olden time. And under his acquirements there lay a fund of humour which, sparkling forth at times unexpectedly, enlivened even the gravest subjects, or discovered something comic in things familiar. Many a long day's walk have we enjoyed together across the hills and heaths, or through the pleasant lanes and woods of Surrey; each alike ready to find beauty in Nature whatever her mood. The last of our rural walks were in Essex in the valley of the Colne, where amid the agricultural scenery we found somewhat of art and antiquity to give a purpose to our wanderings. But he has passed away; an earnest young life, cut off in his prime; lost to the work which he loved; to the literature he would have adorned; and to the friends who cherished his friendship. And now my reminiscences of the years that are fled bring back to me, touched by a sense of sorrow, none but tender memories of our intimacy, and of the words and incidents of our holiday wanderings.

There are still some leagues of sea-coast which we have not seen, so with your permission, reader, we take

the evening omnibus from Colchester for Walton-on-the-Naze. We soon descend from the hilly ground that makes the old city eminent, and enter upon the flat peninsula which forms the north-eastern corner of Essex. On our right spreads the estuary of the Colne, with its numerous shallow creeks and channels; wherein are bred the oysters that contribute to the fame of Colchester, and to the yearly feast of her corporation. There, down on the edge of the marshes, stand the well-preserved remains of St Osyth's priory, looking across the aguish tract to the low shore, which in old time was a frequent landing-place for pirates and invaders. Beyond the estuary lies Mersey Island, backed by Pyfleet Creek; a creek of renown among oyster-breeders. Relics of the Roman occupation are still found there; but if you inquire for the Island on your way thither it may be that the rustics will tell you they never heard of such a place; unless, as once happened to a friend of mine, they should bethink themselves and answer, "Oh, sir! you means Massey Izland."

There is but little on the road as we drive from village to village to divert our thought from excursions. Now and then we get a touch of rustic character and dialect, and our driver being a joker after his manner, who cries "Dust ho!" as he reins up at the inn door, provokes the occasion. "I dunnaw 'n no better 'n yaw do," is the answer to his inquiry concerning a strange horseman.

"Ay tall'd* my missis to tall ye to bring faw bushel," said a man who came up with a scythe on his shoulder clamouring for a big sack of something which

* *a* as in hat.

had not been brought from the town. "Dear heart! ay wants to maw my musta'd."

"Want to mow your mustard, do you? Why, man, it's going to rain. Go home and get your mustard-pot."

"Ah! ay doubt it will," answered the scythe-bearer sadly; and true enough there presently fell a heavy shower.

At Wheeley we meet the 'up bus,' and a stoppage ensues for the collection of fares and tickets. Then Thorpe-le-Soken rubs its eyes, and Kirby says good-night as we rattle through their rural 'street;' and then the scent of the sea comes strong upon the chilly wind, and at dusk we stop at the hotel at Walton within hearing of the noise of the waves.

As the name—Naze or Ness—indicates, Walton stands on a promontory formed by a mass of clay and gravel which presents a few miles of cliff to the sea, rising in some places to sixty or eighty feet in height. No wonder that Essex folk are proud of it, for here they can tell where the water ends and the land begins; a question not easy to determine on the greater part of their muddy coast; and here they can sojourn without fear of ague. It is not a fashionable place, nor is it pretentious; in which particular it contrasts favourably with Southend. Visitors, as we have seen, reach it by a journey of twenty miles from Colchester; or when "weather permits," from the London and Harwich steamers. From the Hotel and the front of the town you look across an uneven green to the edge of the cliff, and the pier with its little cluster of fishing-boats and pleasure-boats, and the sea beyond. And if

you want a quiet holiday by the salt water, and an opportunity to pick fossils out of the 'red crag' on the cliffs, you may here find one and the other; that is, until Walton is invaded by the railway, when its quietness will depart. The beach is so steep, that the bathing-machines are run into the water by capstans, and if you wish to walk along it you have to cross by steps at the inner end a dozen or more of the groynes which are built to prevent the drift of shingle, and protect the cliffs.

Walton is a favourite resort of one of my relatives, whose experiences imply somewhat of primitive habits. He went out one evening to buy a lobster. "Lobster, sir," said the fisherman; "we've got plenty in the basket at the end o' the jetty; but you see, sir, it 'll take a little time to fetch one; and then it 'll have to be biled; and then it 'll be hours a-gettin' cold. You see, sir, we likes to have notice."

After that the fisherman never met the visitor in a morning walk without inquiring, "Like to be wantin' a lobster to-day, sir?"

The pleasantest walk is along the cliff, southwards, about three miles to Frinton, where you may see one of the smallest and most picturesque of churches. How pretty! you will say as you come suddenly upon it from the lane. It stands in a grassy inclosure between the garden of a farm-house and the sea, thickly overgrown with ivy at the west end; half hidden at the east and around the porch by clustering elders, full of blossom in the sunny months of bees and butterflies. Modern handiwork has made it look very plain inside and outside, but the two old diagonal buttresses

and the lancet window that show amid the ivy may be regarded as relics of a former beauty that needed not the grace of foliage.

A walk in the opposite direction brings you to the lighthouse, whence you can look into the bay and across to the coast of Suffolk, which rises beyond the estuary of the Orwell and Stour. In this direction the cliffs diminish in height, and gradually sink down to the muddy level of the shore of the bay.

I walked north and south, through lanes and across fields; and down the zigzags of the cliffs and along the beach; and looked at the photographer's gallery; and had a talk with the boatmen who were speculating as to whether the steamer would call on such a windy day. By and by a smoke appeared in the south, and about two hours afterwards the hoisting of a flag and tinkling of a bell on the pier gave signal for embarkation. Three boats put out with four passengers. "We could-hev took ye all in one boat," said the wrinkled coxswain; "on'y you see it bein' Saturday we expects a goodish few visitors down from London." It was hard work pulling out against the great tumbling sea, and some of the visitors, intimidated by the prospect of a quarter-mile trip across such noisy water, refused to land.

Ahead went the steamer, and soon came upon the 'rolling grounds' in the broad opening of the bay, when some of the passengers, who had so far borne themselves bravely, sank down in utter dejection. But Harwich was in sight; ere long we shot past the long low breakwater, and the lighthouses, and entered the haven, where, however, everything was in commotion: heavy

Dutch boats, barges high laden with hay, and large vessels rocking and tossing as if mad, and even H. M. S. *Pembroke* rolling slowly on the turbulent swell. Happily for the passengers they were all landed a few minutes later at the pier.

Each time that I have visited Harwich has but served to revive and confirm my first impression. It seemed to me wonderful that people should be willing to live there. Imagine, reader, the dullest place you ever saw, and you will have a faint idea of what Harwich is like. A town of five thousand inhabitants should exhibit some signs of life; but there is something in the aspect of Harwich which, notwithstanding vessels in the haven and soldiers in the fort, makes one associate it with Much Wenlock for dulness. Were it not that the slopes of Suffolk look pleasant two miles distant, on the farther side of the estuary, the place would be dreary indeed.

But in former days it was one of the busiest places on the North Sea, where kings and other royal personages, and numbers of passengers besides, embarked and landed. "Harwich," says a traveller, writing in 1742, "is the port where the packet-boats between England and Holland go out and come in. The inhabitants are far from being famed for good usage to strangers, but, on the contrary, are esteemed a little extravagant in their reckonings in the public-houses. This has encouraged the setting up of sloops, which they now call passage-boats, to go directly from the river of Thames to Holland; though the passage may be something longer, yet the masters of the sloops are said to be more obliging to passengers, and more reasonable in

the expense, and the vessels good sea-boats. Harwich has been a sufferer on this account." With but little effort you might fancy it had not yet recovered from its suffering. How it happens that excursion-trains are advertised to run thither I cannot imagine.

But there is a good sea-wall which forms an agreeable promenade along the edge of the broad grassy heights, that afford ample room on their summit for the fort, barracks, and redoubt, where, as a gunner told me, the word was "change old guns for Armstrongs;" while troops of children play on the lower slopes, and artillery-men woo nursery maids. And the outer extremity of the pier, five hundred yards from the shore, is a nice breezy place, and wet withal in blowing weather. Thence you can look across to the broad expanse of sand on the opposite shore which environs Landguard Fort, and, in common with all the river points along the eastern coast, has a tendency to extend itself southwards. Within recent years it has advanced so far across the channel, in a form somewhat similar to that at the Spurn, that fears have been entertained for the permanence of the approach to the haven.

I sauntered about for three hours testing my former impressions, and then crossed over to Suffolk. The boatmen were sulky, and complained of over-work because of the violent wind. "To pull against that for an hour was enough to make a fellow sulky; and it seemed as if the wind meant to keep on blowing jist as hard all the summer." However, it was favourable for the trip from Harwich, and in about half an hour I landed at Walton ferry, a place of three or four houses on the gravelly slope, which there sinks down

to the broad belt of marshes that lie between the firm land and the sea. A heavy round lump of a fort stands near the landing-place; and at every three or four miles along this part of the coast the heights are similarly burdened.

By lane and foot-path along the inner edge of the marshes I walked to Felixstow: a Suffolk watering-place scattered at the foot of a range of bold heights, which is trying to establish a reputation, finding an advantage in the heights because of the out-look, and the means they afford for alternations of temperature. I came to the *Ordnance Inn* in time for a twilight stroll across the saltmarsh to the shingly beach, and there sat listening to the heavy plunge and "scream" of the breakers, until the distance was lost in gloom, relieved only by the gleam of the light-ship in the offing.

Here it was that Felix, a Burgundian monk, landed about the year 654: the first Christian missionary and bishop to the East Angles. From him Felixstow derives its name. It is one of the pleasant places of the Suffolk coast, and is resorted to by folk from Ipswich, and by a few Londoners, who, however, seldom repeat their visit. For Felixstow, although its houses extend more or less scattered along the foot of the heights for about two miles, has not a single shop, and depends on the village of Walton, about two miles distant, for its supplies. One consequence of this dependence is at times short commons at the inn.

"That's too bad," said an unlucky Scot with whom I took breakfast, "to expect me to eat bacon without eggs!"

"Very sorry, sir; but we could n't send for any to-day, because it 's Sunday."

A ragged sandy green, and the saltmarsh from which unpleasant smells arise in the evenings, extend along the front of the village for nearly half its length, where it gives place to a beach of sand and gravel; and thereabouts you may see a few hotels, a few bathing-machines, a few sheds, and a rifle-gallery. Ascend the hill to the Martello tower, and you will see a broad view all across Langer Common to Landguard fort; green marsh and pale dry sand, and out to the tower on the Naze. Ascend again farther on, up the road in the rear of the hotels, and if you have the American imagination "which sees squares in morasses, obelisks in trees," you will admire the streets, squares, and terraces, for which the sites are traced by rough tracks and roads across the bean-fields and large weed plots. If ever they are built Felixstow will boast itself a town. The inland prospect is perfectly rural, with many comfortable-looking farm-houses, and for miles in that direction the land is of the most fertile in Suffolk. There are the Sandlings—acres which produce wonderful crops of carrots. I had been told of a ruin about a mile distant in the fields, and discovered it amid tall standing wheat; nothing more, however, than a fragment of flint wall on the top of a heap of flints thickly overgrown with hazel and brambles. On the road to Walton, about a mile to the south, is another ruin, an ivy-clad arch of an ancient banquetting hall. Besides these relics, Felixstow boasts of having once had some Roman building which was swallowed up by the sea, and is said to be still discoverable at low water;

and a castle that belonged to Earl Roger Bigod on the high ground behind the church; but of which no trace is left. Another attraction is the abundance of excellent water: springs gushing from the cliffs yield a ceaseless supply for all comers, and enliven the scene. Bernard Barton, the Quaker poet, answers an inquiry for a beautiful abiding-place with—

"On that shore, where the waters of Orwell and Deben
Join the dark heaving ocean, that spot may be found:
A scene which recalls the lost beauties of Eden,
And which Fancy might hail as her own fairy ground."

Among the residences is Felixstow Cottage, once the summer habitation of Philip Thicknesse, governor of Landguard Fort. He bought a fisherman's hut standing on the spot, and converted it into a pretty and pleasant dwelling, as described by Mrs Thicknesse in her memoirs.

In my farther walk along the beach I crossed many high groynes; passed houses prettily situate among trees, and under a cliff where red crag contrasts charmingly with overhanging foliage. At Felixstow Point there are signs of havoc wrought by the sea; the cliff is much worn, and presents a curious variety of colour: reddish yellow at the top, darkening as it descends into brown and black, with horizontal streaks of buff and yellow. By searching carefully along the base you may discover fossil shells and coprolites which have been washed out of the hardened clay. Curious things are those coprolites: animal outscourings, as geologists tell us, of the antediluvian ages, fossilized into the form and appearance of oblong pebbles, but

of extraordinary fertilizing properties, as was first pointed out by Professor Henslow. Poor folk in the neighbourhood of Felixstow collect them for sale. They are found in great beds in other parts of Suffolk, and farther inland, even about Royston in Hertfordshire, where I have seen large fields and roads converted into coprolite diggings.

The beach is firm smooth sand, good for walkers and bathers. I rambled on until the view opened of the bay and estuary of the river Deben—Woodbridge-haven, as the fishermen call it. Beyond, standing apparently far out at sea, appear the lighthouses of Orfordness. We shall view them from a few miles in the opposite direction a day or two hence, and will content ourselves with travelling by the eye along the intervening coast.

I returned to my starting-point; crossed the salt-marsh to the seabank, and thence waded across the common to Landguard Fort. I say waded, because such a slow laborious struggle as mine was against the vehement wind that swept across the flat could hardly be described as walking. I was glad to shelter for awhile behind the Martello Tower to recover breath for the next two miles. Surely agues and all other malarious diseases ought to be swept away by such a persistent blast.

The green turf of the common is broken in many places by patches of loose sand or bare gravel, and is bestrewn with thousands of burst cartridges: signs that plenty of rifle-practice is part of the garrison duty.

The fort stands on a slightly rising ground, so that from the walls you can get the view in all directions.

It was built in the reign of James I., chiefly as a defence against the Dutch, who often threatened our eastern coast, and landed three thousand men here in 1667. In old engravings the fort is represented as situate on an island, with square-rigged vessels anchored close under the walls. Harwich haven had then two entrances, one of which must have lain between the island and the mainland, where now we see a few miles of common and marshy pastures, traversed by a narrow winding creek, which at high water is swept by the tide even to the edge of Felixstow.

A trooper, seeing me enter, offered, as he said, to "show me round." The place is built of dark red brick; it has bastions and very old guns; curtains, and inner and outer defences; a ditch and magazines, and the usual appurtenances of a military post. Here and there, in the shelter of the ditch, is a small garden, and there are a few ragged-looking tamarisks; but the general aspect is bleak and cheerless.

A sudden change of colour from green to gray shows us where the tongue, to which reference has already been made, begins its encroachment. Its history is instructive. The drift of the sand and shingle along this part of the coast is to the south-west. By this the north channel was filled up and the fort joined to the mainland; and Harwich haven was left with one entrance only. The drift, however, went slowly on; and formed a tongue of shingle, which in 1804 was nearly five hundred feet in length with a depth of seven fathoms at its outer extremity. A few years later the Cement Works at Felixstow were commenced, and large masses of the cliff were dug away to get out

the 'cement stone,' as it was called: a kind of septaria. And for the same purpose, a ledge was removed which had till then barred the drift at Felixstow Point. Similar works were carried on at Beacon Cliff, on which stands Harwich lighthouse, and the consequences soon appeared. In 1841 the tongue had grown to a length of eighteen hundred feet, and in 1859 to nearly three thousand, and with such a spread of its base, that the depth of the channel leading into the haven was reduced to eleven feet. The case looked serious. If the channel became blocked, seamen would lose the only harbour of refuge that exists between the Thames and the Humber. The Admiralty had made surveys from time to time: and in 1847 they ordered the building of the long breakwater outwards from Beacon Cliff, hoping to drive the tidal scour back to the Landguard side, and so sweep away or shorten the tongue. In this and in dredging away shoals to a depth of eighteen feet, they expended £130,000; but the tongue of shingle still grows, and in this instance Nature threatens to conquer Art.

The ground on the west of the fort was enlivened by an encampment: rows of white tents; groups of men who seemed oppressed with doing nothing; sentries pacing to and fro, and beyond the canteen and a few houses. I walked across the lines, thinking to get to the ferry by the beach, but was warned by a seaman that the mouth of the creek would stop me some two miles ahead; so I had to return by the way I had come.

I arrived at the ferry-house in time to share in the family dinner of duck, peas, and pie; and then, the tide being down, crossed the wide mud-streaked, gravelly

beach to a boat that was left aground, and ensconced myself therein to ruminate until the ferrymen, who lay dozing in their boat near the edge of the breakers, should be ready to start. After awhile one of them waded shorewards, took me on his back, and with a hearty growl at the wind, the two rowed forth against the seas that treated us to showers of spray. An hour's hard pulling, in which they well earned their shilling fare, brought us to the opposite side, where, finding the *Atalanta* ready to start for Ipswich, I went on board.

Harwich is to Ipswich what Gravesend is to London; hence on Sundays the steamers are crowded by passengers instinctively seeking change of scene and air. As the vessel steamed forth from the landing-place we got a view of the broad estuary of the Stour, which stretches inwards with low muddy and marshy shores, as far as Manningtree. Then a turn brought us into the Orwell, which more resembles an arm of the sea than a river, winding with frequent bold curves between flat muddy banks and broad meadows that rise with green slopes to the wooded uplands at their rear. Grimston Hall, on the right, was the birth-place of Thomas Cavendish, the second Englishman who sailed round the globe; made his name a terror to the Spaniard in the Pacific, and brought home gold in plenty. A little higher and we passed Levington, where the 'fertilizer,' already mentioned, was first dug: then Nacton, once the residence of Admiral Vernon.

Soon the increasing height of the banks confined our view to the reaches of the stream. The channel is here so narrow that one cannot but commend the per-

severing enterprise by which it has been made navigable to Ipswich, twelve miles from the sea, for vessels drawing thirteen feet of water. At the town the tide is stopped by a lock, where the Gipping, a small stream that rises near Stowmarket, loses its name and nature in the Orwell. Gipping's-wick, so say the topographers, is the origin of the present name Ipswich.

We passed the thirty acres of docks, and landed near the bridge. I sauntered up narrow streets at a venture, spying out touches of antiquity on some of the housefronts and gables; emerged upon the spacious market-place, and found good quarters at the *Golden Lion*. I strolled afterwards in the pleasant park that with many undulations embraces part of the heights on the west of the town; and then, desirous to see how the folk of the capital of Suffolk looked in their Sunday clothes, I chose a spot by which diverging throngs passed on their way from church and chapel. They look respectable; and the town looks clean: that is, in dry weather.

CHAPTER XI.

The Eye of Suffolk—Vale of Gipping—Ransome's Factory—Stacks of Implements—Ploughs to wonder at—Ingenious Contrivances—Clever Threshing Machine—Farming Tools—Casting uneasy Chairs—Tons upon Tons—Treenails and Wedges—Alas, for the Oaks!—Saw and Buz—Trimming and Squeezing—Kreosoting—Fit for any Climate—Firewood—Moral Matters—The Cardinal's College Gate—A Recent Wolsey, a Butcher—The Old House—The Museum—Stirring News—A Shoe-factory—Woodbridge—The Deben—Rural Landscape—The Seckforde Fund: a Fortune or Misfortune?—Saxmundham—A Captain's Recreation—Aldborough—New Day, new Life—A Mixed Town—Crabbe's Birth-place—The Alde, a capricious River—Crabbe's Work-place: Warehouse and Church.

SEEN from the top of St Mary Key church-tower on a bright warm morning, Ipswich makes a favourable impression on the beholder. It is one of the largest towns in the Eastern Counties, situate on a hill slope, which, with a park on its brow and the quay at its foot, and new stylish chapels, a Mechanics' Institute, and a Museum between, abuts upon the river in a bold curve, so that to one coming from London it appears aptly named in Camden's phrase, the Eye of Suffolk. Masts and factory chimneys rising by the quay betoken much trade by land and water, as if the privileges conferred on the town by the Plantagenet kings, and the Greenland whale-fishery which fol-

lowed, had grown into a wider traffic. Looking beyond the town we see an undulating country and much wood, and the valley of the Gipping: a pleasant valley, which, in the rhyme of a local poet, appears as much like fairyland as Felixstow did to Bernard Barton. In the opposite direction we can discern Harwich and the sea.

Ransome's factory will bear a nearer view. It seems quite natural and appropriate that agricultural implements should be manufactured by hundreds in a part of the kingdom so essentially agricultural as this of East Anglia, was the thought that passed through my mind while I walked down to the counting-house. One of the junior partners, to whom I here repeat my thanks, kindly conducted me over the works, the extent of which may be inferred from the fact that they cover about a dozen acres, and give employment to a thousand men. A few particulars will suffice to convey a notion of the operations there carried on. If at Birmingham we are surprised by the prodigious quantity of manufactured small wares, we shall perhaps be more surprised at Ipswich by the sight of great stacks of implements, any one of which seems as if it would last a life-time. It seems as if ploughs and hooks and eyes were in equal demand. Large buildings and large rooms are indispensable. In the mould-room, the moulds of all the castings are made and preserved, so that reference can be made to any one at any time: archives in wood, I thought, which embody a history of mechanical improvement. The plough-room is something to wonder at, for who could imagine the implement to be susceptible of so many varieties? A

heavy plough, which looks as if it were a revival of the one in use in Tusser's time, is for export to Russia, where, as it will turn a thirteen-inch furrow, it renders good service in the broad wheat-bearing steppes. The Muscovite is a good customer, for he buys agricultural implements in large numbers, and pays for them. Another plough, which opens two furrows at once, is for Australia, the Colonial way to wealth being always more impatient than the maternal. Another, with shares looking both ways, like a steamer with a rudder at each end, has the shafts fitted on a pivot, so that the ploughman when at the end of his field, instead of turning the plough round, has only to reverse the shafts and turn the horses for a fresh start. There are other kinds which a farmer only used to all the humours and requirements of ploughs could appreciate; but very remarkable appeared to me the great amount of ingenuity displayed in the improvements of so ancient and familiar an implement. No wonder that all the great implement-making firms always find champion ploughmen ready to come out and plough their very best at the annual matches. Who would not do his best when so much pains are taken to improve his appliances?

In another room I saw an array of threshing-machines, one of which, besides threshing, winnows the grain, and takes out the 'tailings,' that is, the poor or refuse grain. Will the next improvement fit the machine to grind the grain? so that at the last it shall become as clever as some Birmingham machines which "do everything except talk."

The reader must imagine the winnowing machines,

turnip-cutters, chaff-cutters, and other ingenious contrivances, and the hurdles, rakes, forks, and other things useful in tillage, for to mention them only would form a tedious catalogue. Moreover, there is something interesting to be seen in the foundry. Messrs Ransomes are purveyors for railways as well as farms; and I saw the casting of railway-chairs by a quick and ingenious process.

One part of the floor is occupied by a very narrow semicircular railway on which small wheeled frames are made to travel round the curve from the sand-heap at one end to the pot of molten metal at the other. In these frames the moulds are hung on pivots, so that by a touch they turn upside down at pleasure. A boy reverses a mould and rams it from the under side full of sand. The mould rights itself; the orifice is opened, and a boy at a run pushes it to the opposite end of the railway. There the men with the big ladle immediately pour in the liquid iron, and in a few seconds a solid railway chair is formed. By this time another boy has run up with another mould; and so it goes on all day, filling and casting, and turning out tons of chairs every week.

To keep rails firmly fixed in the chairs, oaken wedges are used in enormous quantities; and we see in another range of workshops what an important branch of industry is maintained to supply the demand. The place seems alive with machinery in motion. A huge oak stem is dragged in till it lies under the cross-cut saw that swings to and fro with an energy that seems ferocious; and in a few seconds the end of the stem is trimmed and a transverse slice about six inches thick is cut off, looking like a great wooden cheese. Up flies the

saw; the log is dragged forward another six inches, and another slice is cut off; and so on; and in that way the fierce saw cuts up the stateliest oaks of the forest into morsels. Next the circular saws come into play, and the great slices are cut with the grain into small blocks about two inches wide, and half an inch less in thickness. To insure excellence of quality all the sap and unsound portions of the wood are thrown aside. Boys then trim off the corners at a small circular saw, which, from the peculiar noise it makes, I have heard called a buz. This brings the blocks or wedges to a rough oval shape ready for compression; so that when in use they may not shrink in any temperature. If the wedges shrink the rails become loose. They are forced one by one into an oval iron mould or tube by a machine which pushes out the first by the thrust of the second, and they fall from the mould, smooth wedges slightly polished by the severe pressure which they have undergone. But this is not all: they are dipped in kreosote and forced through a smaller mould of the same shape, which compresses them still more, and they are then ready for the market and for any climate. The demand is great from all countries which have railways. Tree-nails are also manufactured in large numbers, and as none but the best wood is used the waste of sappy and unsound parts is prodigious. Great stacks lay in the yard for sale at twenty shillings a ton, and customers with wheel-barrows and baskets were coming continually from the town for sixpenny-worths. But in winter the demand is still more lively.

The moral as well as the material wants of the work-people are cared for: a library is established for

their use, and a large hall in which those who live far from the factory may dine. If Ransomes' men are not wise men it must be their own fault.

The ingenuity exhibited by the firm is shared by another member of the family, who with waste chips from quarries or masons' yards, or, in fact, almost any kind of earthy rubbish and a chemical solution, will manufacture excellent building-stone.

A young banker to whom I presented a letter of introduction at once set forth as my guide to the most noteworthy sites in the town. Of course one's first inquiry is for relics of the great Cardinal, who loved his native town so well that he built therein a grammar-school and college; and you are shown the gate of the college: all that remains. It is of red brick, elaborately ornamented in the style of the Tudor age, but, leaning over towards the street, looks older and weaker than it really is. Up to within the past ten years there was a Wolsey, a butcher, living in the town: a fact which leads one to imagine an unbroken succession of butchers of the same name from the days of the original Wolsey.

The Old House, as it is called in Ipswich, is now occupied by a bookseller; and a very picturesque old house it is, with its carved panels, pilasters, and brackets, fit to appear even in Nuremberg. The Museum may be regarded as a model of its kind, for it was arranged with admirable method by Professor Henslow, whose portrait hangs above a case of plants which was one of his gifts to the town. There is also a painting of a Cambridgeshire worthy, Thomas Clarkson, in which he is represented as addressing an anti-slavery meeting. The

Mechanics' Institute has a good library and reading-room. What crowds there were around the newspaper stands! for on that day all the papers were full of news about the first Confederate victory—the memorable battle of Bull Run.

Hither and thither we walked; up to Fonnereau Park on the hill-top where the townsfolk may take pleasant recreation; then to the Museum and Mechanics' Institute; then up a church-tower; and then, as my kind conductor was called away by business, I went to look at a shoe-factory. Here again the power of machinery was remarkably exemplified. The leather for soles is cut by a machine; the uppers are cut by hand and sewed by sewing-machines, and are fastened to the soles by nails only: hence the making of a lady's boot or shoe is but the work of a few minutes. We may thus reckon by thousands the number of boots and shoes which a hundred hands in a single factory will manufacture in a year.

In the afternoon I journeyed onwards by rail for a passing visit to Woodbridge. The line crosses a fertile district, and from the church-tower you can see a landscape in which grain and greenwood abound; and the Deben flowing, as all the streams of this eastern coast, between flat marshy banks to the sea, which rounds off the horizon with a stripe of blue. It is just the country for testing with advantage the capabilities of the implements we saw at Ipswich. And immediately below lies the small quiet town, which has that pleasing rural look imparted by numerous trees and gardens among the houses. Here Crabbe once practised as a surgeon: and hereabouts was the country

of the Quaker poet, Bernard Barton, who knew how to express good thoughts in pleasing rhyme. The town is fortunate above many: for the Seckforde almshouse fund is so rich, that besides building a block of magnificent almshouses, and allotting twenty-six pounds a year with clothes and nursing to each inmate, the authorities have set apart a surplus for the establishment and maintenance of a grammar-school, a library, and a fountain. I say fortunate, in the hope that with such ample resources the inhabitants will not abandon their self-reliance.

The young banker had assured me of a welcome at the house of one of his relatives, and by this my brief visit was rendered the more agreeable. What a merry tea we had! It sent me away after the friendly "farewell" was spoken in blithe mood to Aldborough.

About twenty miles farther the train stops at the junction at Saxmundham, another of the quiet rural towns. "The dullest place in all England," said a half-pay captain once describing it to me. "I don't know what I should have done with myself if I had n't had a horse that had a habit of running away every time I took my wife out for a drive."

A few miles farther towards the coast, and at twilight I walked down the hill and the long street, from which Crabbe drew some of his scenes and characters, to the *East Sussex Hotel*. "I don't quite like recommending my own house," said the landlord to me on the way to Woodbridge: "it seems like praising myself. But if you should come to my house, I'll make you comfortable." And so he did.

One of the primest of summer days, bright and

breezy, tempted me forth on the morrow ere the town was awake. The freshness of early morn is as delightful by the sea as on the hills; and for a little while we are beguiled with the fancy that the old world is not old, but young and quick with new existence. But the sun rises higher and higher, and the cool breath of morn on land and water loses its coolness, becomes disturbed with noises, and we feel that Nature is indeed very old.

Aldborough, if less rural than Felixstow, has an advantage in the absence of salt-marsh. There is nothing between it and the sea but the Parade and the dry shingly beach. This Parade is a level gravelled footway two miles in length, extending beyond the town at each extremity. "The navvies made it after they 'd done the railway," said a fisherman in answer to my inquiry. You step from it immediately upon the ragged grassy margin of the shingle which slopes down to the sea in a series of steps or terraces formed by the action of the waves. And there are numerous capstans, and boats, nets, and other fishing-tackle; among which you will be frequently reminded of Crabbe's faithful descriptions.

The town consists of one long street and a Moot Hall built between a range of heights and the beach, so that while walking along the Parade you see a curious mixture of backs and fronts of houses; poor little cottages with thatch or pantile roofs, and queer little pebbled doorways, but looking picturesque withal, squeezed in among villas, sea-side lodgings, a public reading-room and library, and two hotels. Near the Moot Hall stood the cottage in which Crabbe was born,

until by dint of wind, weather, and the hand of improvers, it fell about twenty years ago. Judging however from engravings, it must have resembled those picturesque but gloomy little edifices which still remain.

Walking southwards we come to the quay and port of Aldborough, near the sea, in fact, but far from it along the course of the river. Here we have another instance of that remarkable southerly drift of which we saw an example at the mouth of the Yare and at Landguard Fort. The Alde once flowed directly into the sea here at the town; but the mouth became choked, and the stream taking a new channel down the Vale of Slaughden, now flows parallel to the shore, and within a few hundred yards of the sea, for ten miles to its outfall. We saw a similar instance in our walk by the Ehen on the coast of Cumberland.

If the Vale of Slaughden has beauties, as is averred by old Camden and a local rhymer, they are not obvious to an ordinary observer. The long peninsula, a monotonous waste of sand and shingle, would require a very lively imagination to discover its beauty. The scene as viewed from the quay is thus described by Crabbe:

> "Here samphire banks and saltwort bound the flood,
> Here stakes and seaweeds withering on the mud;
> And higher up a ridge of all things base,
> Which some strong tide has roll'd upon the place."

Here it was that he worked as a boy piling up butter and cheese in the warehouse, and again during the, to him, dreary interval between the close of his ap-

prenticeship and his departure for London on board one of the trading sloops he had so often helped to unload.

In returning from the quay we can ascend the heights in the rear of the town and find a way thence to the churchyard. The walk here is a pleasant contrast to that along the beach; and the view from the signal station is always enlivened by passing vessels. I saw hundreds of coasters sailing to the north and south, and among them the smoke of three or four steamers. I have read in an engineer's report that owing to local peculiarities there are more total wrecks off Aldborough than any other part of the coast, except the Goodwin Sands.

I had borrowed the key of the church at the sexton's house in passing, desiring to see the view from the top of the tower. From that elevation you can well observe the course of the river with its sudden bend to the right, as if afraid of the waves that leap and foam within a furlong's distance. And you follow the stream and the long barrier plateau between it and the sea down to Orford lights, where the white towers gleam brightly in the morning sun: and a little way inland appears Orford castle; an old tower standing up amid a mass of trees. Northwards you see Aldborough mere, and its flat marshy shores; and the coast stretching far out towards Dunwich, along which, if all go well with us, we shall walk in the course of the day.

Let us remember while descending, that in this church Crabbe served his first curacy. A monument to his memory is erected on the north side of the

chancel, where his bust, with its fine brow and thoughtful expression, will impress you as that of no ordinary man. An inscription on the pedestal records—"To the memory of George Crabbe, the Poet of Nature and Truth, this monument is erected by those who are desirous to record their admiration of his genius in the place of his birth."

CHAPTER XII.

A seaside Walk — Aldborough Mere — Waifs of Wreck — East Anglian Talk—Sizewell—The Vulcan Arms—Minsmere—Ruined Churches—Ups and Downs—Southwold Bay—A Resting-place—A Battle and a Ballad—The Earl of Arlington's Letter—The Earl of Ossory's Gallop—Far travelling of Sound—The old Tower—The old Priory—Dunwich, Past and Present—Rustic Talk — Walberswick — River Blythe—Southwold—A beneficial Town—The Coast-guard—Fishermen's Lounge—No Light wanted—A fresh Departure—Easton Broad—Covehithe Broad — Encroachments — Covehithe Ness — A Pleasant Common—Kessingland—Farewell to Frolics—Grindstone Cheese—Meeting and Greeting—Pakefield—Lowestoft—Sand-drift—New Town and Old Town — Promenade Pier — The Easternmost Land — Mutford — Oulton Broad—The Yacht again.

In mood as blithe as the morning, I set out once more for a seaside walk. The Parade, which becomes shingly and sandy in places, at length ends with a curve and loses itself on the wild beach. Then a rough path through scrub, rushes, and sea-holly, leads to a footbridge across the shallow mere. The bridge is built of old ship timbers, which tell mutely of wrecks. We shall see many a relic of the same sort before we reach Lowestoft, and handsome gilt carvings that once decorated the stern of a stout merchantman now nailed to the front of sheds and summer-houses, or poor little cottages.

The beach is rough and toilsome, and bestrewn with lumps of red crag as full of shells as the Wren's Nest limestone. So it continues; alternation of sand and shingle, and sand-hills which gradually increase in height as we advance, and are thickly covered with fern. Presently with a feeling of relief we step from the loose sand to firm turf, which rises to a low cliff; and come to acres of bracken and heath, and a life-boat station, and get views inland. Two men were mowing, or, as they pronounced it "mawin'" the bracken, and the air was pervaded by the aromatic scent. East-Anglian as they talked it sounded very rustic: *arly* for early, *lawah* for lower: he go: I'd soonah maw barla' nor this: yĕs, it are good weathah."

At Sizewell we pass Lady Ogilvie's pretty rustic lodge, which stands near the cliff, inclosed by a thick fence of furze and a stripe of plantation for shelter; and on the beach in front is the family bathing-machine. I turned into the *Vulcan Arms* for lunch, and asked the landlord if he had ever thought about having a sign painted. "No, he hadn't, but he didn't see why the Greek gods and goddesses shouldn't hev had a herald's college. Any way, he'd like to have a pictur' of the *Vulcan Arms*, and he sometimes thought it should show a anvil, with bellows and pinchers and a man's arm, with shirt sleeve rolled up and the hand holding a hammer. That's my notion," he said, "of what would do."

Furze, fern, and ragwort still prevail on the onward route, and the rise of the cliffs gives us cheerful prospects; and a tall decayed-looking tower shows us how far we have to walk to Dunwich. While passing

Minsmere sluice-house I asked a woman the name of a small ruinous chapel which stands on a neighbouring mound: "It ain't got no name," she answered. "It 's bin like that afoor I was bawn." As the Ordnance maps show, East Anglia is remarkable for the large number of ecclesiastical edifices described as "in ruins." The great number of parishes—Suffolk has four hundred and ninety-nine—and their small size, contribute perhaps to this result; to say nothing of the scandalous neglect of the church by the church at the beginning of the century.

The rounded forms in which the land abuts upon the sea create a series of ups and downs, where at times we trudge through loose sand in the hollows, or mount with firm foot upon the bluffs, disturbing colonies of noisy sand-martins by our tread. By and by we come to a higher elevation, the site of the old gaunt tower, fronted by a range of cliff; and there below us spreads the glowing expanse of Southwold bay, or Solebay, and the air quivers so with heat, and the sun shines so brightly, that we will yield to the temptation and take a lounge on a bank of fern.

All around is so calm and quiet that the thought even of noise seems disagreeably intrusive. Yet these pastoral heights have been startled by the uproar of war; and had it been our lot to wander here about the beginning of June, 1672, we should have witnessed the great battle of Solebay: one of those hard fights in which England and Holland strove for the dominion of the sea. It will amuse us while reclining on our fragrant couch to read a ballad in which the writer, while telling the story, does not conceal his politics, nor the

notion that our French ally had secret orders to "leave the English and Dutch to destroy one another." I have taken leave to exchange one coarse word.

"One day as I was sitting still
Upon the side of Dunwich hill,
And looking on the ocean,
By chance I saw De Ruyter's fleet
With Royal James's squadron meet,
In sooth it was a noble treat
To see that brave commotion.

"I cannot stay to name the names
Of all the ships that fought with James,
Their number or their tonnage;
But this I say, the noble host
Right gallantly did take its post,
And cover'd all the hollow coast
From Walderswyck to Dunwich.

"The French who should have join'd the Duke,
Full far astern did lag and look,
Although their hulls were lighter;
But nobly faced the Duke of York,
Though some may wink and some may talk,
Right stoutly did his vessel stalk
To buffet with De Ruyter.

"Well might you hear their guns, I guess,
From Sizewell-gap to Easton Ness,
The show was rare and sightly:
They batter'd without let or stay
Until the evening of that day.
'T was then the Dutchmen ran away,
The Duke had beat them tightly.

"Of all the battles gain'd at sea,
This was the rarest victory
Since Philip's grand Armada.
I will not name the rebel Blake,
He fought for Roundhead Cromwell's sake,
And yet was forced three days to take
To quell the Dutch bravado.

"So now we've seen them take to flight,
This way and that, where'er they might,
To windward or to leeward.
Here's to King Charles and here's to James,
And here's to all the captrins' names;
And here's to all the Suffolk dames,
And here's the House of Stuart."

It is so pleasant here among the fern and ragwort, and sunset seems so far off that we may take our leisure, and read a few particulars of those hostile days hitherto unpublished, contained in a letter* written by the Earl of Arlington—one of the Cabal—to the Duke of Lauderdale. It suggests the inference that fear of the Dutch was then a lively sentiment in England.

"Goring House, June 1, 72.

"My Lord,

"Our mindes have been very unquiet ever since Tewesday last to know what our newes would bee of the engagement then, and the persecution of it since, the Comon relations will best tell y^r G^ce both. All I will saye considering the advantage y^e enemy tooke upon us wee are well come off and although his R^l H. had minde enough to have

* For a sight of the original letter, and permission to take a copy, I have the pleasure to thank Richard Almack, Esq.

engaged the enemy on Woodensday and had certainly done it if a fogge had not miraculously fallen as to prevent it, yet I must confess to y^r G^ce considering all circumstances I am glad we are parted as wee are for the present. The Dutch have suffered infinitely more than wee it is certaine; and yet they will not only dissemble it better as to point of reputation, but will be able to appeare at sea againe much sooner than wee can, for they have many ships ready in Hollande which they will mann with the shattered ones they carry in now, and vapour likewise in that point and have their people of their side more than we shall. His R H tells ye King he will lye in Sole Bay againe to refit and take in provisions but his Ma^ty thinking he may doe it with much more dispatch and security at ye buoy of ye Nore hath sent my Lord Clifford to persuade him to it: w^thin twenty foure houres wee shall ^know how hee succeedes. The condition ye fleete shall be founde in will decide y^e question w^ch by that time will be treuly proven w^th w^ch his R H hath promised also a true relation of this confused action by that we shall also know what grounde there hath been for ye severe censures of ye behaviour of ye french. Y^e King hath this day spoken to ye. Ambassad^r to see how he can bring to passe that ye 6 or 8 french men of warre plying at ye channels mouth for ye security of their merchants may be sent hither to strengthen our fleete w^th w^ch he hath charged himself. I wish y^r G^ce a good progrisse and successe in y^r voyage and am unfeinedly

"Y^r G^ces
most humble and most
obedient servant
Arlington."

The sound of the firing during the battle was heard

far inland. The Earl of Ossory,* who was then on a visit at Euston, about eight miles north of Bury St Edmund's, heard it, and immediately took horse and galloped away to join the fleet. The distance, in a direct line, was full thirty miles. But there is a still more remarkable instance on record, with which we may entertain ourselves a few minutes longer. There is a tradition at Cambridge, that at the beginning of June, 1666, the year in which he began his optical discoveries, Newton, then a Bachelor of Arts, went into the hall of Trinity College and mentioned to some of the Fellows that a battle was being fought between the Dutch and English, and that the latter had the worst of it. The Fellows requiring him to explain how he came by his knowledge, he answered, that being in the observatory (then over the gateway of the College) "he heard the report of a great firing of cannon, such as could only be between two great fleets, and that as the noise grew louder and louder, he concluded that they drew near to our coasts, and consequently that we had the worst of it, which the event verified." †

During the first three days of June, 1666, the English and Dutch fleets were in action between the Naze and the North Foreland, distant at least seventy miles

* He commanded the *Victory*, and kept his station astern of the Duke of York, until his ship was so disabled that he was forced to bear away to refit. It was probably during the engagement that he wrote the short note which Mr Almack preserves in his collection: "I am so miserably manned, as I ame forced to be a beggar to my friends, therefore pray make a very *small* addition to what has been bestowed upon me."

† Cooper's Annals of Cambridge.

from Cambridge. The sound of the firing was heard also in London. Pepys records on June 2nd, "several do averr they heard the guns yesterday in the afternoon." And a few hours later he went to Greenwich, "and into the parke, and there we could hear the guns from the fleete most plainly."

But the old tower rises there behind us; a conspicuous sea-mark, yet a gaunt skeleton of antiquity, telling mutely of the glory that has departed. Its western face still exhibits the architect's taste and skill; and the fine arch that once faced the nave still displays its lofty outline; and three large pointed arches remain to mark the line of the north aisle: and that is all. If you never before felt how a ruin heightens the sense of lonesomeness, you may feel it here.

By a rough brambly lane which skirts a wheat-field, we approach another ruin, the old Priory. Inclosed on all sides by standing corn, close and pathless, and the field-gate being plentifully stuck with tenterhooks, we must content ourselves with a distant view of the gray walls, in which the decaying arches and windows are half hidden and beautified by the ever-creeping ivy. The gate, on the western side of the field, is a good specimen of a Tudor arch, crowned by great pyramids of ivy; so there are touches of beauty by Art and Nature over which we may linger for a little while. How quiet is all around: the rustling of the rich yellow grain as it bends beneath the gentle breeze, and the far-off tinkle of a blacksmith's hammer, and distant murmur of the sea, are sounds that harmonize with

> "The undefined and mingled hum,
> Voice of the desert, never dumb,"

that seems to deepen the silence of a summer's noon. And as the lane falls rapidly, we get views of broad brown field slopes, descending one beyond another in various tints of summer ripeness to the blue waters of the bay.

In such a lonesome scene it seems hard to believe that Dunwich was once an important sea-port: that here stood the palaces of the East Anglian kings and bishops; that from the days of Felix the prelates dwelt here for two hundred years, until the see became part of the diocese of Norwich; that eight churches, besides conventual establishments, hospitals, and a chantry, once stood on the uplands, or nestled in the hollows, mingling religious life and worship with the operations of trade: that here was once so important a haven for ships, that when Richard I. fined the eastern ports for supplying his enemies with corn, Dunwich paid a thousand and sixty marks, while Ipswich and Yarmouth paid but two hundred each. But we have seen with our eyes two of the relics, and history is at hand to tell of those that have perished; of the inbreak of the sea; the burying of the King's Holm by a flood of shingle; the washing away of the Cock and Hen hills; the market and cross, and many dwellings.

At the foot of the steep lane I came to a few houses; so sequestered that you might fancy them forgotten by all the rest of the world, and it seems quite natural that the rustics should have nothing to do but sit and drink in front of the public-house. "Nobody evah come to stop at Dunwich," says the landlord; "leastways if company do come they only stop for the deh" (day). One of the men approving my remark as to

the fertile appearance of the farm around the ancient Priory, answered, "Eh! it are a good farm; it pehs (pays) well, that do." And presently when I spoke of walking along the beach to Southwold, he said, "It 'll be law wateh at faw o' clock, and it won't be naw laweh," signifying that at low water a belt of sand below the lowest terrace of shingle, much easier to walk on than the loose shingle, would be laid bare.

I surveyed my route from the coast-guard hill while returning to the shore, and saw that the belt of sand would be open by the time I had trudged across the broad slope of pebbles. The prospect generally is placid; a low coast with level pastures and dykes behind, and the tall tower of "Walsick,"—Walberswick; and beyond the rounded height that terminates the bay.

At six o'clock I came to the long timber piers that stretch out from the mouth of the Blythe—the port of Southwold. Here the whole beach is shingle, and a broad tongue of shingle produced, as in other instances that we have seen, by the southerly drift, stretches half across the entrance. Judging from appearances the port must be difficult of access, for the tide rushes in furiously, and the strong capstans here and there on the pier are suggestive of a struggle with in-coming vessels.

I walked up the river-bank to the ferry, and crossed to the flat meadows which are all surrounded by high banks, like Dutch polders: a scene that reminds us of the fen-country. Here too we find a Lincolnshire term in use; for the common lands are under the charge of 'fen-reeves.' The town, approached by a path running along the top of the bank, is well situate on an eminence that overlooks the surrounding country. As I

walked up St Edmund's hill and crossed the green to the *Old Swan*, a comfortable inn, I noticed plate glass in some of the windows, and indications which led me to infer that I had come to a place where the struggle for life is not very severe. "This town of Southwold," to quote an old memorial, "of a seacoast town, is the most beneficial unto his Majesty of all the towns in England, by reason all their trade is unto Iceland for lings."

Suffolk crag and gravel ensure a dry soil for visitors who come here for a sea-side sojourn. From St Edmund's Hill they may pace along Gun-Hill and the Ladies' Walk, and get views over land and sea, and lounge at the Coast-Guard station, where a Manby's apparatus is kept in excellent order. The man on duty told me it had not been used since 1859, when, as he phrased it, "there were forty-seven lives on the beach, and all were saved but one." Having to pass two Broads in my next day's walk, I asked him whether they were open, as in that case the route by the beach would not be passable.

The outer side of the bluff appears to be given up to fishermen, for there I found them congregated in numbers, round the two sheds built for their shelter in foul weather. Here they loiter, looking down on boat-builders and capstans; on heaps of tackle and heaps of refuse; on the hundred boats which during the season catch soles and shrimps; and spying for Orford light when the nights are clear. I asked one of them why they had no lighthouse at Southwold. "We don't want one," he answered; "there 's no sands here. 'T is a deep-water bay."

If the beach were less stony, visitors might take more pleasure there than they now find; notwithstanding that agates, carnelians, alcyonites, and other rarities may be picked up by those who know how to look for them.

I strolled about till after nightfall; and departed in the morning by the hard path which for a short distance forms a walk above the upper edge of the shingle. But it ends too soon, and when you come to Easton Broad the beach is loose and toilsome. The large sheet of water backed by a wood looked bright and blue, yet somewhat sleepy. At times after heavy rains the sluices are drawn, and then a stream rushes forth and wears a channel across the beach, which, as I saw in the remains of the last dry bed, would be too deep for agreeable wading. Has the Broad had anything to do with the disappearance of Easton Bavent? a place of some importance, as old records tell.

A little farther by the side of the bright green sea and there is Covehithe Broad, all but choked with reeds, wherein flocks of little birds find snug shelter. Here again a channel crosses the beach; and the same story is told of a town swept away. Covehithe, the birth-place of John Bale, now exists only in name. Is the destroying element still at work, and will future maps show a broader sea and narrower land than ours?

Then we ascend a cliff which stretching seawards forms Covehithe Ness; the point which looked so pale and distant as we saw it during our yesterday's walk. From its farther side we see, some miles beyond, a con-

fused cloud of white, red, and smoke marking the situation of Lowestoft. Then we come to a great common where it is delightful walking between the clumps of furze, while a lively breeze sets in from the sea, and large white clouds sail across the blue overhead. But too soon long banks of loose sand neutralize our delight, until we find firm footing once more on a low cliff which stretches onwards with a gradual rise, forming a long yellow slope that seems to absorb the sunshine, so bright are some of its streaks.

Kessingland, a village amid fields, looks pretty with its church-tower backed by trees. A labourer who had, as he said, been "spreeding muck," and was sitting down to rest "afoor goin' back to Kess'land," took the opportunity to ease his mind on what was to him a grievance: the disuse of old harvest-customs. "Why!" he said, in the sing-song tone of the Suffolk rustic, "I remembers when there used to be three frollucks (frolics) at harvest-time: one afoor they begun, one in the middle, and one when they 'd done. Then the farmers got down to two frollucks; then they got down to one; then they took to givin' half-a-crown and none, and at last nawthin'. And now if ye do but look at the pump they axes ye what ye want, as if a drop o' wateh was too much for a baw. Dash 'em! I say, why can't they let us hev our largesse again as we used to hev it? What's ten shillin' a-week?"

The old story. Here was one who would have liked a revival of the "Horkey" such as Bloomfield describes,

> "When up they got full drive, and then
> Went out to halloo largess,"

and when there was a "lord" over the reapers, and the merry-making, in which, as the poet sings, it was

> "— found out they talk'd the louder
> The oft'ner pass'd the horn."

It was an old custom, for Tusser mentions it while recommending that reaping should be day work:

> "Grant harvest-lord more, by a penny or two,
> To call on his fellows the better to do:
> Give gloves to thy reapers, a largess to cry,
> And daily to loiterers have a good eye."

There is a jocund sound about it that seems to accord with a great rural festival; but the gladness always degenerated into uproar and drunkenness; and any right-minded person who remembers what Suffolk peasants were thirty years ago, will hold that "nawthin'" is better than the old coarse "frollucks." I told the labourer he might as well ask for restoration of Covehithe and Easton Bavent as for revival of the Horkey, and suggested that the improved harvest-homes which some intelligent and kind-hearted proprietors had recently set on foot were worth consideration. "I dun knaw," was all he answered. I forebore to ask him if he liked Suffolk cheese, which (at least the sort given to labourers) is described as hard as grindstones: so hard that even rats and mice refuse it.

The shingle thins off, and sand prevails more and more along the beach. Presently I saw three wayfarers approaching by the foaming edge of the breakers, one of whom, as they came nearer, started off and scrambled up the cliff to meet me. It was the young

banker from Ipswich, taking a holiday with two friends, and a walk along the shore from Lowestoft to Aldborough. So we had cheerful greetings; and then sat down on the brow for a talk, in which I communicated particulars of the route and of the 'entertainment' offered by Southwold. What a treat to exchange pens and ink, the rattle of gold and silver, and the handling of 'approved paper,' for the prospect of blue sea and sand and shingle, and a two days' walk with knapsack on shoulder!

A little farther and there is Pakefield; a village on the cliff, with a few good houses and a couple of red-striped bathing-machines amid the usual cottages and lumber of a place of fishermen. And there are signs that we have come to a region of shallows, for the blue sea shows large brown patches where the sands lie near the surface. Thereabouts is 'Abraham's bosom,' as sailors call a portion of the deep water which is protected by the sandbanks from the north and west. Here I descended to the beach and found good footing, and so came by noon to the terrace at Lowestoft, where I saw all the angles of the masonry filled with drifting sand, and where whensoever the wind blows from the sea the shower of sand climbs over the parapet, and makes itself disagreeably felt along the promenade, and in the open windows of the houses.

Leystuf, as the natives call it, is an attempt to force a new growth on an old place, which, judging from appearances, is not so successful as the shrewd railway-contractor who promoted the forcing could have desired. From the pier you see the old town farther to the north, crowding one of the rounded hills peculiar to

this coast, with a church spire rising from the highest cluster of roofs. Between are the houses of traders and visitors; black boats and green-striped bathing machines; warehouses and building yards; the railway-station, and hotels; and patches of grass and trees occupying all the slope down to the level of the new town, where two long timber piers inclose the port. An old long blocked-up channel by which Norwich and Lake Lothing used to communicate with the sea, was re-opened; but for some reason the expected trade has not arisen.

The south pier, broad and spacious, is a place of fashionable resort and recreation. About half-way along it stands an assembly-room, the use of which is indicated by rows of seats and music-stands. The pier-head is circular, and has a central temple-like building for shelter in rough weather, and is much resorted to by mothers, nursemaids, and children, among whom I sat for an hour looking round on the scene.

Then I walked up to the old town. Its principal streets exhibit but few of the features usual in a sea-side place; but they abound at the foot of the steep, narrow alleys by which it communicates with the loose sandy beach. Walking down there on a hot day is far from agreeable. I trudged out to the farthest extremity of the sandspit:—the most easterly land in England, and saw a long yellow cliff, similar to that which we paced this morning, stretching onwards towards the mouth of the Yare. We have already looked along it from the farther end at Gorleston, so may spare ourselves any more walking in that direction; except a

short trip to the high breezy range of Lowestoft common on the northern edge of the town.

Then by lane and footpath I walked about two miles inland to Mutford, where a bridge and lock cross the cut which connects Oulton Broad with Lake Lothing, and forms part of the water-communication with Norwich before-mentioned. A numerous fleet of yachts lay moored in the Broad, and while I searched among the fluttering colours for the burgee of the *Adelaide*, the Captain's quick eye espied me, and presently I stepped from the boat to the well-remembered deck. There was the Vicar looking not less hearty than when we voyaged together a year ago; and by the time I had been on board half an hour, and had heard that after witnessing a frolic we were to take a cruise up the Waveney, it seemed only natural that I should resume my culinary duty.

CHAPTER XIII.

A Frolic—The Waveney—A Crooked River—Beccles—Up the Taw—About Ale—Shipmeadow Lock—Foul Wind—Walk to Bungay—Fragment of a Castle—The Earl, and the King of Cokenay—Somerleyton—St Olave's—A Walk—Burgh Castle—Roman Camp, Walls and Towers—Confluence of Yare and Waveney—Breyden Water—Prospect of Yarmouth—Two Ends of a Walk—Turning Point—Effects of Sunshine—A Rough-and-ready Spokesman—A Talk about Working Men—Return to the Yacht.

Favoured by a brisk wind, the next day's frolic was as animated and exciting as the most enthusiastic yachtsman could have wished. We did our part in gazing, criticising, and applauding, and late in the afternoon hoisted sail and stood up the Broad. It is a crescent-formed sheet of water, communicating with the Waveney at its upper end by a narrow channel, called Lyke Dick, by the wherrymen: Dick being one of their ways of pronouncing dyke. It was dusk when we entered the river, up which we sailed slowly for a few miles to a convenient mooring-place, whence, while a fire flickered under our kettle on the bank, we beheld the distant flights of rockets that terminated the day's pastime at Oulton.

Renewal of our half-gipsy life was very pleasant with its quests to farm-houses and little emergencies,

and hourly change of scene; but let it suffice that we found the Waveney, though very winding, to be an agreeable river for navigation, for it is broad and deep, and as the Captain said, "there's no fear anywheres of stickin' on a shoal even close to the banks." It is the boundary between Suffolk and Norfolk, open to the tide, which sends up a great volume of water felt as far as Shipmeadow lock above Beccles. Its name is said to be derived from the Saxon *wafiend ee*, waving water; and if waving may imply crookedness, the name is markedly descriptive. For the stream winds continually between the two counties; now through broad meadows where the banks are firm and cattle numerous; now past rushy flats and draining mills, low knolls, slopes of heath, and patches of fir. There is more grain and less marsh than we saw along the Bure; but so level is the region that we saw the massive tower of Beccles before we had lost sight of Lowestoft spire.

Beccles, the *Beata Ecclesia* of monkish days, is renowned for ale, and a grand old church dedicated to St Michael. We went on shore and found the sexton's wife, who unlocked the church door, and while we paced up and down the nave and aisles gave us to understand that she thought it a church to be proud of; citing a few scraps of history by way of proof. But her scraps did not include that Crabbe, after a long courtship, was married in this church.

She then asked us if we wanted to "goo up the taw?" We did want to go up the tower, and went up; and from the top we looked down on a pleasing view. The town, interspersed with many pretty gardens, seems to enjoy its

quiet, and above the bridge presents a bowery slope to the river. And all around spreads a level green landscape, chequered in places with light brown and yellow; striped with long rows of poplars and Dutch-like avenues, and the Waveney curving hither and thither, until its bright gleam disappears under a distant range of low hills. Nowhere in the county do the hills rise above three hundred feet in height. It has been often said that man's handiwork spoils Nature's beauty; but while looking round on the fair prospect which seemed to drink in the glowing sunshine, I could not imagine it to have ever been more beautiful than now.

We replenished our ale-keg at a house which was said to retail none but the best; and tested the contents during our further voyage up the river, and came, after conscientious trials, to the opinion that Beccles ale is not equal to its reputation. It is a sweetish, heavy liquor, much more soporific than exhilarating in its effects, which, perhaps, may account for the drowsy look of the town, remarked by us while on the tower; and for the decline of its population, as shown by the census report. Ale which does not quicken the drinker, or set him singing, cannot be good. The author of that rare old song "Back and syde go bare, go bare," was a Suffolk Doctor of Divinity, and he must have warmed his heart with something better than the Beccles brew when he wrote—

"No frost nor snow, nor winde I trow,
Can hurt me if I wolde,
I am so wrapt, and throwly lapt
Of joly good ale and olde."

We passed another night on the river, and had tedious navigation the next morning; the Captain labouring with his quant against an adverse wind. So we crept through Shipmeadow lock, which makes a picturesque scene, and a few miles along the ever-narrowing stream, the Captain continuing to growl that "the wind would n't come fair nohow." It soothed him to tell how that two years ago he set sail from Bungay, sped merrily down the Waveney, crossed Breyden water, caught the tide up the Yare, and sailed up to Stalham within the day: a distance of seventy miles. That was something like sailing! At length I agreed with him to walk the two or three intervening miles to Bungay. As for the Vicar, the day being very hot, he preferred, like a true churchman, to take his ease and see what the hours would bring forth. Perhaps there would be a chance for a talk with the neighbouring miller.

Bungay is one of those small quiet towns which have never outgrown the tranquillizing influences of a very rural neighbourhood. The talk of its inhabitants is, for the most part, as East Anglian as that of the rustics who crowd it on market day. It has a noticeable round-towered church and a fragment of its once famous castle. The latter is in the garden of the *King's Head*, where you go up a few steps and find remains of the old flint walls, and a portion of the keep, whence you may see leafy gardens, a part of the town, and many poplars. It was a proud place, or at least had a proud owner, seven hundred years ago, when Hugh Bigod, by taking part with the rebels against Henry the Second, brought upon himself the royal displeasure. As the ballad has it:—

"The King has sent for Bigod bold,
In Essex whereat he lay,
But Lord Bigod laugh'd at his poursuivant,
And stoutly thus did say:
Were I in my castle of Bungay,
Upon the river of Waveney,
I would ne care for the King of Cokenay.
* * * *
"The baily he rode, and the baily he ran,
To catch the gallant Lord Hugh,
But for every mile the baily rode,
The Earl he rode more than two."
Were I, &c.

By and by came the King, whereupon

"Sir Hugh took three-score sacks of gold
And flung them over the wall,
Says, 'Go your ways in the devil's name,
Yourself and your merry men all!'
But leave me my castle of Bungay,
Upon the river of Waveney,
And I 'll pay my shot to the King of Cokenay."

By the time we returned to the yacht, the Vicar had had his talk with the miller and was ready for dinner. In the afternoon we turned our prow down stream, and again made sail; and as we passed Beccles met other yachts, beating up to take part in a frolic that was there to be held. Night overtook us a little below our former mooring-place; and the next day, with a good wind, we sailed merrily past the dyke by which we had come out of Oulton; past Somerleyton; under two railway swing-bridges; past the dyke which makes a short cut for wherries to Reedham, and so to St Olave's, where we moored for the rest of the day.

Then the Vicar and I, having an expedition in view, went by rail to Belton, a few miles to the east, and walked thence towards a square-looking eminence, two miles farther across the levels. By loose sand and rough heath we came to brickfields and cement works, beyond which appeared a range of old flint wall. We scrambled up a gravelly slope, and presently saw the great parallelogram of a Roman camp, inclosed on three sides by the ancient walls: now known as Burgh Castle.

The Vicar, on devotional thoughts intent, walked away to a neighbouring church, while I sauntered about the ancient stronghold. It is a good specimen of Roman work, being built for the most part of flints, the surfaces of which on the eastern side appear to have been dressed or flattened; and it is strengthened at intervals by round towers—*Turres exploratoriæ*, from the top of which the camp at Venta Icenorum could be signalled in case of need. The whole length of wall, each end wall being half the length of the principal range, is four hundred and twenty-eight yards; the height is fourteen feet, and the thickness nine. Near the top and bottom are five courses of tile, still showing bright red, after seventeen centuries, and forming a series of stripes which contrast pleasingly with the gray flint. And that broad belt of flint between, so full of freckles and weather stains, and yellow with lichen on the shady side of the towers: what a picture it is! one that you might study for hours, and discover an endless diversity of strange groupings and appearances. Looking only at the sound places, it would impress you as an indestructible wall, on which time and weather could print marks of age only, but could not destroy.

But there are fissures and holes and gaps from which great lumps have fallen, suggestive of the inevitable doom; though as the whole site has been bought by Sir John Boileau, we may hope that the existence of wall and tower and Prætorian gate will be prolonged for centuries yet to come. In one place a large elder full of blossom overhangs the angle by one of the towers; in other places large masses of ivy droop from the top, and elsewhere there is a steep slope covered with thorn, ash, and oak. And the grim old ruin is thereby beautified.

At the time of my visit, the area within was covered with a fine crop of clover. The west side is not walled, for there the precipitous form of the ground was a sufficient fence, and was further protected by the sea which in the Roman days, as there is reason to believe, washed the foot of the steep. At present a meadow, about a furlong in width, lies between the steep and the Waveney; and beyond that stream flows the Yare, and with a low flat tongue of marsh land between them the two streams fall into Breyden water. And beyond Breyden we see Yarmouth, and a wide sweep of the flat country traversed in our former voyage. There we see Stokesby church, and Caister far off; the gliding sails, white and tan-coloured; the windmills, and belts and clumps of trees, with which we have already become familiar in that part of Norfolk.

Yarmouth was the starting-point of our last summer's walk along the beach; and now that we see it again, sitting, as it seems, upon the waters, we may regard our walk along the coast as well-nigh complete. From the Yare to the Humber, and from the Colne to the Waveney, the wild shore is no longer to us a place

unvisited. Images thereof will mingle with our recollections for many a year to come. We have yet to explore some parts of Essex, and finish with a walk along its low flat coast on our way back to London. Could we have a more interesting turning-point than this—a relic of Imperial Rome? What a world of thought rushes upon us at the very name as we turn away from the distant prospect!

Twice did I walk round the whole extent of the camp surveying the wall within and without. Then passing through the Prætorian gate, which still exists in the eastern wall, I sat for a while under the shadow of the ivy, enjoying the shade, for the heat of the day was sweltering. The solitude and silence were complete, so that in the broad field of red wheat spreading in rich ripeness before me—the ancient Roman burial-place—I could hear the continual crepitation of the ears under the scorching glare.

I had returned to the steep bank above the kilns, when three men scrambled up, two in the garb of fishermen, the other in dirty fustian, looking like what in Lancashire is called an 'engine-tenter.' With husky voice, but a good supply of rough and ready words, and passing his hand over the broken humps of the wall, he described to the other two the Roman manner of building. When he finished I ventured to express my surprise that a man who appeared so intelligent should be so shabby and dirty; especially on a Sunday.

"Ah, sir!" he answered, "you see in me one of them who planned that great strike of the Amalgamated, a year or two ago."

"The more fool you," thought I; and inadvertently

gave words to my thought. I expected an angry retort, and prepared to apologize.

But the husky voice replied, "I see it now, sir, but I did n't see it then, when I was sent to the North to lecture and speechify and stir up the trade. I was a great man then. But as soon as the thing was done, there was n't a master that would employ me. Precious hard times I 've had of it since, and while the masters have been pocketing their thousands I 've had to take anything that offered. And now I 'm down here looking after a steam-engine; and that 's why you see me so dirty."

Thereupon we had a talk; but for a time he would do nothing but reiterate his especial grievance—the contrast between himself and the masters: they pocketing their thousands: he in unhappy plight. And one among them in particular merited reprobation, inasmuch as having once been a journeyman he was now as bad as all the rest, and thought it quite fair to pocket his thousands and only pay the men their wages. Did such a man as that deserve to be let off easy?

"At all events," I answered, "he deserves fair-play, which is something that working-men for the most part are unwilling to practise even to one another. Perhaps that master whom you dislike so much had more skill, more self-denial, or cultivated his abilities to better purpose than his fellows; and the thousands which he pockets are no more than the fair natural outcome of his perseverance. If, instead of going about and helping your mates to fling away their ammunition as the first step towards a campaign, you had persuaded them to imitate the master whose success vexes you so much,

it would have been far better than it is for their pockets and yours."

"Then you are one as thinks the men don't know how to take care of themselves?"

"Speaking of the great mass, and with allowance for many praiseworthy exceptions, I am. It may be very plucky to strike, but it is very unwise. There are better ways than that of bringing the masters to reason."

"What ways?"

"Not very hard ones; for there are so many masters who are unwise, or unprincipled, or mere feeders or money-grubbers, that it would not be difficult to rise to better mastership than theirs, by persevering exercise of opposite qualities. That would be a campaign worth the fighting, and could be begun without any flinging away of your ammunition by a strike."

To hear a charge brought against the masters seemed to mollify the man, for he admitted "there was something in that. But how were the men to set about it?"

"By making good use of the many opportunities of education now open to them: educated workmen are not to be trampled down. Then by economy and fair-play among themselves. There must be no pulling down of the men who can rise; by far too common a practice among them. Nor must there be interference with any man's right to work for what wages soever he pleases, whether little or much. A navvy whom I once met on the North Kent Railway told me 'he started one time to save his money, and be a teetotaller, and kept it up a goodish while, but had to give in at

last, for he could n't stand bein' called a Teapot by his mates. They tormented him so with that blessed Teapot, that he had to give in.' And then after thinking a little, he went on, 'What fools we be with our money, sure*ly* ! Why, sir, if the men 'ud only save their money, they mought buy out the masters over and over again.' That navvy, you see, had some perception of the true state of the case."

"But I can't agree with you that the working-men are fools, for all that. I did n't think they were fools when I was a missionaryin' of it."

"Of course you did n't; but you have made an important admission as regards the missionary. However, take another instance. The men of an engine shop in Southwark went with their wives and employers to Epping Forest for a holiday. There they amused themselves, dined, and drank, and at last began to quarrel and fight; and in spite of the presence of their employers, ended with brutal violence. And for that day's pleasure those men spent a hundred pounds. Were they fools, or not? Just consider what can be done with a hundred pounds for permanent benefit!"

How much longer the argument would have lasted I cannot tell. But at this juncture the Vicar returned from church and we walked back to the yacht.

CHAPTER XIV.

Another Flight—A fresh Start—Lavenham—A Footpath Way—A Scene for a Painter—River Brent—Monks Eleigh—Justice in Olden Time—Panorama of Plenty—Happy Farmer—Dialect—Sudbury—A Change of Morals—Religion and Politics from a Landlord's Point of View—St Peter's Church—The Stour—A Drive—Shrewd Driver—The Busiest Bishop—Little Maplestead—The Round Church—Castle Hedingham—Norman Keep—Sible Hedingham—Sir John Hawkwood—A Talk in a Church—Halstead—A cluster of Colnes—Tombs of the De Veres—What De Bohuns and Guyons have come to—Relics—Greenstead Green—Stanstead Hall—A Brisk Walk—The Mangle-turner—Coggeshall—Feering—Landlady's Praises—Fertile Landscape—A Critic on Tiptree—Messing.

As mentioned in a former chapter, I walked away into Essex after my first short visit to Hitcham Rectory. If agreeable to you, companionable reader, we will now fly to that well-remembered spot, and take thence a fresh departure on foot.

From the rear of the grounds the gardener pointed out certain landmarks, which, if I could keep them in sight or mind, would enable me to shorten by a mile or two my walk to Sudbury. It was one of those foot-path ways somewhat perplexing, but very pleasant, which offer us the perfection of a rural walk: slanting across a pasture, running along an old green lane, and

losing itself all on a sudden in a farm-yard, whence by one of many gates and stiles a fresh departure must be taken. Looking hence, we see Lavenham, or Lanham tower, rising from a church said to be the finest in the county. Then we bury ourselves in the hollow path between tall wheat and a high tangled hedge, skirting three or four fields without a glimpse of the landmarks. Then we must beat a track through acres of 'plough,' as huntsmen call it; and drop on the farther side into a deep water-lane, where coolness prevails, and polypody and other ferns hang from the gnarly roots of patriarchal elms, that grasp the high steep winding banks as with huge fossil claws. Presently we come to the paddock where we are to make another turn, which looks so much like one of Gainsborough's pictures, that instinctively we stop to look at it. Ash and beech inclose it, their tall stems hung with ivy, forming grand masses of upper foliage; a few sheep browse on the smooth green level; a pond rests near the end, reflecting the blue sky and grouping trees, backed by a rough hurdle fence, and in the opening beyond appears a distant church-tower. Were I a painter, I would pass a summer holiday hereabouts and paint the picture.

A little farther and I came out upon a hard road by a mill on the little river Brent, and so to the village of Monks Eleigh, where Nature and Art combine to impart a cheerfulness of aspect, the one by overspreading the old barns with pale green moss, the other by abundant whitewash; while the hammers of a couple of smiths keep up a musical cadence suggestive of industry. I walked up the steep path to the church-

yard for Abbot Sampson's sake; for once in maintenance of his rights against the Archbishop of Canterbury he beat up the villagers' quarters, seized three manslayers, and led them bound to St Edmund. After this, says Chronicler Jocelin, "the men of Illeigh set up a certain cucking-stool, whereat justice was to be done in respect of deceits in the measuring of bread or corn:" from which our inference would be unfavourable to the morals of the men of old did not the poets assure us that

> "To them life was a simple art
> Of duties to be done."

At the end of the village a road crosses the bridge, and rises and falls between hazel hedgerows, but mounting always to a higher level until it commands a panoramic view, which combines tillage and park-like scenery in such a way as to impart to the beholder a very pleasing impression. To one who remembers how great cities blot out more and more of green fields every year, there is an especial charm in the sight of so large a tract still unblemished by houses and undisturbed by railways.

Even one who is not a farmer may, while walking between these leagues of fields, understand something of the reason why Suffolk wheat commands a high price at Mark Lane, for the signs of good cultivation are too plain to be misunderstood. The county boasts more than one manufactory of excellent implements; and the enormous muck-heaps seen in spare nooks and corners along all the roads denote a due appreciation of cause and effect on the part of the cultivators.

Some of these heaps, fifty yards long or more, are completely overgrown with grass and weeds, having lain for months undisturbed. At times you see a labourer turning one over to facilitate the process of mellowing. Indeed, everything indicates a prevalence of that peaceful prosperity which the sight of farms always suggests. If the morality of all concerned were but equal to the cultivation we might regard farmers as the happiest of Englishmen.

Nevertheless, may we not say happy farmer! His place of work is Nature's domain, open to the sky and the air, and under the eye of the sun. His work is carried on in presence of the wondrous splendours of dawn and eve; in the noon-tide glow; and the stars and moon look down thereon with their nightly lustre. The winds and the breezes salute him, and even while he sleeps his handiwork is fostered by the increase-giving rains. And though storm and cloud at times darken his prospect, and sleet and fog chill his expectations, he learns thereby to adapt himself to the vicissitudes of the bountiful Nature whose disciple he is.

The dialect of the natives is as rustic as the landscape. Some of the women have that sallow unhealthy-looking complexion which is to be found among the cottagers of every county; but the prevalent face is round and chubby, with a bulfinchy expression, and dark eyes. "Ye'll hev to ax at the lawge" (lodge) said a woman at Little Waldingfield who told me it was "fahr mile to Subbry"—four miles to Sudbury. They seemed the longer because of heavy driving rain.

Sudbury lies in a deep valley watered by the Stour. To descend without sunshine into the birth-place of Gainsborough, the painter of so many bright sunny landscapes, seemed very unlucky. Perhaps it was the weather which made me fancy the town still looked ashamed of its disfranchisement for corrupt electioneering practices. Very bad practices they must have been to stir up the House of Commons to inflict upon the borough the threatened punishment of the lukewarm church.

I dined at a public-house in the market-place. The landlord having seated me in the bar parlour, filled up the intervals between the calls of customers with talk, which seemed to ease his mind. "The last five year," he said, "had worked a change in Sudbury: things was very different to what they used to be. Five year ago the young men was all for drink; now they was all for religion. There was n't a quarter of the drink drinked now as there used to be. If 'twas a goin' to go on like that, keepin' a public-house would n't pay." (He pronounced *they* and *pay*, as if spelt *thy* and *py*.) "If so be there was ever another election, it 'ud be religion and not drink as 'ud carry the day. He could n't think, for his part, what the pa'sons wanted. Look at the Peter church. Why, he had been told by them as hev been abroad as there ain't no difference between it and a Popish church. The pa'son wanted to try it on at the Gregory church; but the people would n't hev it, and a purty confusion the town hev been put to about the chairs. There was two hundred chairs, and the church would n't hev em."

It was a question of chairs or pews to which he

referred. To change the subject, I inquired whether the town felt itself under a cloud since the disfranchisement. "That depends on how ye look at it," he answered. "If everything's fair in electioneerin' the same as in war, we don't; and then, if 'tain't fair, there's some as 'll never think so. So 'tain't easy to say how we feels. Some thinks we ought to be lookin' up a bit since the town made the trimmin's for the Princess Royal's weddin' dresses."

I went to look at St Peter's church, and found the door open. True enough: it did look very much like a Popish church, such as you may see in France. There are the same ornaments, the same fittings, the same clumsy ugly rush-seat chairs crowding the floor. From all that, it is but a short step to the images and the tawdry about the shrines. The "Gregory church" perhaps foresaw danger in the two hundred chairs with which it was to be garnished.

The weather brightened and I resumed my walk. The Stour with its small fleet of wherries, as seen from the bridge, bordered by willows and winding through pleasant meadows above and below, imparts a lively aspect to the bottom of the valley. The opposite ascent is long and steep. As I turned to look at the town which has woven baize, or silk, or velvet, ever since the days when Edward III. first established therein the Flemish weavers, an old man driving up in a gig pointed with one finger to the vacant seat at his side, and gave me a significant look, but spoke not a word. I accepted at once, and mounted. Then he told me who he was, and whither going. "You an' I have met, dau n't ye see, an' we shall goo a little wy together.

We can hev a drop o' ale at the turn. I commonly has a drop for my elevens; but I can manage a pint o' a'ternoons besides, about fower o'clock."

I asked if he knew anything of the morality of Sudbury. "Do I knaw my awn name?" he answered. "Yow sy, yow was tauld it was growin' religious. I daun't think 'tis. Once I axed one of the curates if he would n't be glad if the devil was got rid of, and he said 'Naw, for that 'ud be takin' the bread out o' the mouths o' the clergy.'

"That wouldn't py no how," added the venerable, with a shrewd twinkle in his bright hazel eye.

Is that curate a reader of quaint and earnest old Latimer, who in one of his sermons asks, "Who is the most diligent bishop and prelate in all England?" and answers, "There is one that passeth all the other, and is the most diligent prelate and preacher in all England. And will ye know who it is? I will tell you: it is the Devil. . . He is no unpreaching prelate; he is no lordly loiterer from his cure: but a busy ploughman. So that among all the prelates, and among all them that have cure, the devil shall be for my money, for he still plieth his business."

We took a glass of ale at the turn; and as we drove on again he said, "So ye want to see the church at Little Maplestead. I daun't mind if I goo round that wy home;" away trotted the horse at a brisk pace, and soon we saw the church—one of the four that yet remain to exemplify the architecture of the Templars: a church in the fields. It is built of flint, and has been carefully restored; but blue lias lime having been used for the pointing, the effect is curious,

The floor is paved with encaustic tiles, yet although the "Round" with its arches satisfies the eye, and the roof is lightened by the white ribs dotted with red stars, it may fairly be objected that the altar-rail is too heavy and the apse too gloomy. Nevertheless, it forms a picturesque object in the quiet landscape.

By a narrow, somewhat hilly road, I walked on to Castle Hedingham, a considerable village, which owes its distinctive name to the castle that has looked down upon it from a bold slope for seven centuries: an interesting specimen of a Norman stronghold. I arrived after the hours during which visitors are admitted, but Mr Ashhurst Majendie, in whose estate it stands, kindly sent one of his men up to give me entrance. It dates from within about fifty years of the Conquest, and displays the characteristics of the period: walls twelve feet thick and more than a hundred feet in height, and very severe in aspect: a grim place for Stephen's queen, Maud, to die in: the great hall on the second floor is spanned the whole width by an arch of such grand proportions as to magnify your idea of the strength and massiveness of the edifice. The architect who planned that bold sweep little dreamed that it would one day bestride missionary meetings and agricultural gatherings; and that his fire-places and round-headed doorways with their zigzag mouldings would age into things of beauty. If such care as is at present bestowed be continued, one sees no reason to doubt that the mighty keep will stand a thousand years longer, and witness changes yet more remarkable than those wrought by railways and telegraphs. North Essex, as seen from the upper windows, contents the eye with

rural beauty of the quiet order: a beauty produced by centuries of planting and tillage, but which the theory and practice of modern farming threaten to destroy in one generation.

Among the nearest of neighbouring villages is Sible Hedingham, where the tanner's son was born who in his day made a great noise in the world. Sir John Hawkwood was one of the characters that minstrels loved to sing about: he did valiant service for Edward III., then crossed over to Italy where as a Free Lance he made the English name our admiration and a terror. O Hawkwood, says the old rhymer,

> "O Hawkwood, England's glory, sent to be
> The bulwark and the praise of Italy."

An invitation from Mr Majendie awaited me on my return to the house, by which I had the advantage of agreeable conversation on local matters while we sat at dessert. He then walked with me down to the church, and described its peculiarities: a pointed arch on each side between the other arches of the nave, which are round, and the chancel; and the entrance to the rood-loft in one of the pillars. We talked so long that it was almost dark when I came to Halstead, four miles farther; a rustic town which had become familiar with gas, and was beginning to feel the approach of a railway. Trusting to a recommendation I went to *The George*, but the bed-rooms were ill-ventilated and cimiceous.

Earl's Colne, to which I walked before breakfast the next morning, is a characteristic specimen of an Essex village, not a mere colony of poor cottages with

a great squire as patron; but a place of general prosperous aspect, where, in the mile that you walk from one end to the other, you see a British School, Mechanics' Institute, good shops, a wheelwright whose stock of timber spreads far on the road, and substantial dwelling-houses, among which is the doctor's. It gladdens one to discover that agricultural villages are not essentially poor and sluggish, as some theorists argue.

Situate in the valley of the Colne, a stream that flows through Colchester to the sea, this village shares the distinctive name with Wake's Colne, White's Colne, and Colne Eugaine: all named after the De Veres, Earls of Oxford, and their connections, and within sight of each other on opposite sides of the valley. In the Wake's Colne pedigrees occurs the name of Joan the Fair Maid of Kent. The De Veres were brought hither from Hedingham for interment in the Priory, of which not a trace is now left except the name to a well-timbered estate and mansion at the lower extremity of the village, and there, in a cloister at one side of the garden, four of their tombs are preserved. They are tombs of the old sort, on which artist and sculptor bestowed loving thought and handiwork, and though mutilated, still retain much of their original beauty. The date of the oldest—the tomb of Robert the fifth Earl—is 1296; the next is 1371; and of the others 1392, the last two being the tombs of Robert the ninth Earl, and Philippa his wife. This Earl, though he was created Duke of Ireland by Richard II., bears a very ignoble character. The wars of the Roses claimed some as victims: the twelfth Earl and his son were beheaded at Towton by the Yorkists.

Their fate was avenged by the thirteenth Earl at the battle of Barnet. He fought afterwards at Bosworth Field, and was made Admiral of all England. He lived in great state and splendour at Hedingham. Henry VII. honoured him with a visit, and fined him for breach of the statute concerning retainers, in return for his magnificent hospitality. On the day of his funeral here at Colne, nine hundred black gowns were given away among his dependents and poor people. Alas, for greatness! even the tombs have perished: and of those that remain one commemorates the unworthiest. Another lordly family, the De Bohuns, have dwindled down into dull cottagers, whose name is Bone; and the Guyons are labourers and carters of timber.

A few relics of later date are preserved within the house: a cabinet of Oliver Cromwell's; two chairs that once belonged to Harvey, and the forceps invented by the "great Chamberlen," as he is called by professors of the art obstetric. And the owner of all is a descendant of the "friendly Carwardine" mentioned in the Life of Cowper.

The neighbourhood is delightfully rural, with lanes and meadows, wood and water, to dispel any impression of monotony. Within a morning's walk is Greenstead Green, proud of its church, the gift of a lady, and an early specimen of Gilbert Scott's modern Gothic, which justifies the local pride. In the same region is Stanstead Hall: a Tudor house with a corner turret and gabled dormers, surrounded by a moat and stately trees; but which, judging from appearances, is inhabited only at the back.

I enjoyed my rambles the more as I was here among friends; but one evening I bade them farewell, intending an early start on the morrow. By six in the morning I was on the road pacing away briskly for Tiptree, for although the July sun was shining brightly the temperature nipped one's fingers. "Cowld enough for frost," sir, said a man who told me he was going to hoe "wuzzels."

"But where is your hoe?"

"My hoe? I left 'n in the cowse:" the latter being the rustic way of pronouncing *cowhouse*. Presently a woman whom I accosted with "Fine morning, makes one feel quite young again," answered, "That it do, sir, jest like a two-year old." It must have been such a woman as that who in a village near Chelmsford described herself in the census schedule as Master of the house. "How can that be?" inquired the collector of the papers; "surely your husband is master of the house?"

"No, he ain't. He on'y turns the mangle."

All along the route the country looks prosperous, with heavy timber, and broad slopes of wheat, turnips, and clover, and cottage gardens that seem to rejoice in the recompense they yield to patient labour. "Wonderful" indeed, as a cottager expressed it, are the rows of peas. Coggeshall came in sight, a place that gave its name to Ralph of Coggeshall, who wrote a book about the Crusades, and to the baize long known as "Coggeshall Whites;" and where, as old Norden relates, "ther were to be seene 2 teeth of a monstrous man or gyant of so great magnitude and weight as 100 of anie men's teeth in this age cannot countervayle

one of them." Are these two teeth still in existence?

Without entering the town, I turned into a road on the left, and came to Feering, just as the hostess of the village inn was preparing breakfast. She set the table for two and we sat down together, whereby her desire to talk and her curiosity to know what had brought me into such an out-of-the-way place were gratified. It does one good to witness the strong local attachment that prevails among some country folk. "Was n't Feering a nice place? Had I ever seen pleasanter country? or a prettier parsonage? 'T was prettier once afore 't was altered." It looks pretty and picturesque still with its timbered walls and clustering chimneys. There was one drawback, I answered, Feering, like many other places, could not or would not supply milk. How often have I stopped in a village amid fields where cows were grazing on every side, and yet had to drink the tea or coffee without milk, because none could be got for money whatever might be the case as regards love. The good woman however was not to be disturbed in her opinion; she charged me ninepence for my breakfast, including rasher and eggs, and asked as I slung on my knapsack for a fresh start, "Which do you like best, sir, Essex or the sheres?" Readers who have accompanied me thus far will be at no loss for my answer.

Going on again I saw still the same fertility, and signs of a numerous rural population, and a landscape in which the chequer-work of green, red, and yellow was varied by large brown squares of caraway. A rustic who was leaning, hoe in hand, against a gate seemed inclined to talk, so I halted to gratify him.

He had, as he said, "a job o' hoein' to look after, but could do a little talkin' as well." On hearing my praise of the scenery and fertility he repeated the question I had so recently heard. "Which do ye like best, master, Essex or the sheres?" How he crowed when I remarked that Essex had not had fair play from those who always spoke of it as dull and ugly. On my telling him I was going to Tiptree, he answered, "What to Muster Mechi's farm? Ye'll see some niceish hazarble (arable) down there; but to my thinkin' 't ain't no better 'n anybody else could do as had Muster Mechi's money. To be sure Tiptree were a poor place prejusly; a man could n't live on 't, and I ain't sure as Muster Mechi could now, if so be as he had n't got a biggish pocket som'eres else to put his hand in. It 's easy for a man to say as his lessest wuzzels is bigger 'n the biggest in the parish when it do n't matter how much they costes. However, you be goin' to the place, and ye 'll see 't for yerself. You 'on't be long afore ye sees some popple trees, and then ye 'on't be fur from Tiptree."

It was clear from this that Mr Mechi's proceedings, whether successful or not, had set his neighbours talking and criticising. So much the better. Thereby is truth wrung from experience, and the way prepared for conviction.

Ere long I saw the poplar trees, and the scattered village of Messing and its two windmills; and the luxuriance diminished and patches of heath and naked country appeared, all betokening that Tiptree could not be far off.

CHAPTER XV.

Tiptree Hall—Mr Mechi's Farm—Are you the Bailiff?—Surprising Grass—Reforming a Farm—Replacing the Buildings—How to Feed—Improved Pigstyes—Mr Mechi on Live Stock—The Tank—Steam Engine, Pipes, and Fertilizing Showers—Crops and Meat—Devonshire Farmers—About the Farm—A few Words on the Food Question—Alas! for Rural Landscapes—Tiptree Heath—Braxted—Estuary of the Blackwater—Tottum's Cock-a-Bevis Hill—Wickham Bishop's—Thomas Tusser—John Ray—Ad Ansam—The Blackwater—Witham—Chelmsford—Broomfield—A Mistake that ends well—An Essex Farm—Thousands of Gallons of Milk—Transformation of Fields—Competing Crops.

A BEER-SHOP with *The New Times* for a sign was another evidence of nearness to a place which had given up the old ways. And on turning a corner a little farther on I saw Tiptree Hall, a new white substantial villa-like residence, with a lawn, firs, and laurels, and gravelled drive in front. It is a peculiarity of Essex to apply the term Hall to a farm-house, and to call the squire's residence—that which in other counties would be the Hall—the Court or the Lodge. It stands on the edge of Tiptree Heath, and thereby enhances the contrast between the land within and the land without the fence. A tall man, who was busy placing rows of the wheeled hurdles which are not

uncommon in Essex and East Anglia, accosted me with "Are you the engineer?"

"No, I am not the engineer. Are you the bailiff?"

"Yes, I 'm the bailiff; we 're havin' a new steam-engine, and I thought you might be the engineer. I was n't expectin' anybody else just at present. You called on Mr Mechi, did ye? He 's been here two or three times lately, but he did n't tell me you were comin'. May be he forgot it." I was beginning to fear that my ten miles' walk from Colne would end in a disappointment, when the bailiff said, "It do n't make any difference. You can see the farm all the same. Anybody can see it;" and taking me forthwith under his guidance he led the way to the lawn, and pointing to an adjoining meadow, said "Look at that."

The meadow contained five acres of Italian grass. It had been fed close until the middle of May, when it was treated to a shower of liquid manure, and left to the influences of sun and air. At the beginning of July the grass was mown, and the hay into which it was made stood there on the ground a stack of eleven tons. Again the fertilizing liquid was showered, and although but three weeks had since elapsed the grass had grown six inches high, and looked vigorous. It was a result that told strikingly in favour of a good quality of grass and generous treatment.

Tiptree farm comprises one hundred and thirty acres, for which Mr Mechi paid about £3000. To bring it into condition according to his notion cost him £6000 more. The old house and old farm-buildings were entirely demolished, and replaced with new; timber trees were cut down, and all crooked and useless fences

grubbed up. New roads were made for ready access to all parts of the land; new fences planted and ditches dug, and from eighty to ninety miles of drains were laid down. In short, whatever could be done to convert poor land into good land was done.

The farm-yard was next to be looked at. The buildings are constructed of brick, slate, and iron, with as little wood as possible; and the bailiff took pains to make me aware that they are placed in a certain relation one to the other to facilitate labour and economize time. The roofs are all whitewashed on the outside to check the absorption of heat, and all the rain water that falls on them is caught by spouts, and prevented from washing away or diluting the manure. One of the buildings is a cook-house, in which food is prepared for pigs and cattle; cooked food being much more fattening than uncooked. The barn is large enough for horse-work to be done inside, hence whatever the weather, threshing and other operations can always be carried on. The horses, rarely fed on hay, have a diet of mangel, or mangold, as the British farmer perversely calls it, with chopped wheat straw and bruised oats. The pigs lie on a floor of wooden rails, not on straw, and as their droppings fall at once into a pit beneath, the animals are cleaner and drier than those in ordinary styes; but it may be doubted if they are quite as comfortable. An Essex farmer, who came one day to see the pigs, of which he had heard so much, went away and reported that he saw not pigs, but one solitary grunter only stretched on the wooden gridiron: which has ever since been a sort of bucolic joke against Tiptree. However, the rails admit of a circulation of

air below as well as above the animals, which tends to their benefit. Indeed, thorough ventilation of all the buildings has been an essential point; and as they are placed so as to avoid cold as much as possible, the result is, horses always willing to work, fat sheep, cattle, and pigs, with less of disease and death from preventible causes than on ordinary farms.

Concerning the live-stock, Mr Mechi says, "Let us keep them warm in winter and cool in summer—free from tormenting flies. I shall never consider we are perfect till we can keep up a given warmth in winter, whilst we have in summer cool and shaded paved yards." As to the general treatment of horses, cattle, and sheep, he continues, "They are never turned out; nor do they receive any grass hay or clover hay, except a small portion during the interval between green crops and root crops. In summer they are fed in mangers on wheat-straw chaff, cut one-eighth of an inch, and tares, lucerne, or green rye, cut also into chaff the same size, adding ground beans, oats, or meal, with linseed. In winter our carrots, swedes, and mangold, will be well washed, passed through Gardner's turnip-cutter, and again passed through a toothed-cutter machine, so as to become what I call root-chaff, and a little ground beans, barley, or oatmeal, soaked linseed, steamed potatoes, and a little salt, varying the food as much as possible, to stimulate their feeding."

Steam-engines and other mechanical appliances are kept for various working purposes, the chief one being the distribution of the manure. All the manure from every part of the premises drains into a great underground tank holding eighty thousand gallons, in which

it undergoes a treatment to prepare it for the outflow. Air is forced through the mass from time to time, which promotes its comminution and fermentation. Even dead animals are thrown into the tank, where decomposition reduces them, with the addition of water, to a sufficiently liquid state. The liquid is then forced by the steam-engine into the pipes laid radiating in three directions across the farm, the longest branch being three-quarters of a mile in length; and from these pipes by means of a hose the fertilizing liquid can be showered over all the fields. In this there is no stint, for unless the ground be liberally fed it will not produce liberal crops. On this particular Mr Mechi says, "Perhaps some of my readers may be surprised when I tell them that we irrigate all day long, and every day, wet or dry, Sundays and hard frosts only excepted. The quantity applied daily may average from five hundred to seven hundred hogsheads. In dry weather it is no uncommon thing that we apply one inch per acre, and cause the drains to discharge abundantly, as though it had been raining heavily for twenty-four hours. We feel that the poor hungry sub-soil is thus saturated and amended, and that a thousand affectionate or affinitive compliments are being interchanged, and unions effected between the elements of air, water, and the infinitesimal soluble and insoluble granules of mother earth." The cost of manuring in this way he states as less than eighteen-pence an acre.

The course followed is to take two green crops, then wheat is drilled in at the rate of a bushel to the acre, for it is a prime condition of high farming to sow

as little seed as possible. With the copious irrigation the land increases every year in fertility. Whatever may be the opinion of other agriculturists, the owner of Tiptree expresses himself as fully satisfied with the results obtained on his farm. He states his wheat crop as more than five quarters to the acre; barley seven quarters; oats eleven quarters; and mangel-wurzel at from twenty-five to forty tons to the acre. And of live-stock he says, "I seldom make less than ten to thirteen-score pounds of meat per acre over the whole farm: it is the key to good crops."

I had passed through the whole range of buildings; had looked into the great tank and seen how the feculent mass within had been made apparently to boil by the forcing in of air; had heard from the bailiff that light one-horse carts were used on the farm in preference to wagons; that Mr Mechi preferred rape-cake to oil-cake for the cattle; that the water-jet was not unfrequently used to sprinkle all the roofs in hot weather, and so keep them cool, and to wash out all flies, spiders, and other insects from the inside of the buildings; that he, the bailiff, was a sincere convert from the old to the new system of farming; when two farmers from Devonshire arrived, and requested permission to view the farm. We walked at once to the fields, where I had the advantage of hearing their remarks. To me the condition of the land did not appear better than that of other well-kept farms, and I thought there was a look of nakedness, which, however, might be occasioned only by the fewness of hedgerows. Broad deep drains which you must cross on plank bridges make no show above the surface. It was the 26th of July, and

the question with the Devonshire men was, whether the wheat, beans, and mangel which we then saw shewed, as they expressed it, "a good crop." They talked unreservedly, and put shrewd questions to the bailiff; and the conclusion they came to was that Tiptree farming was not better than the farming in their own county, but that, on the whole, the Tiptree crops were good. Old Aubrey tells us that two hundred years ago the agriculture of Devonshire was reputed the best in the kingdom. For my part, I noted heedfully the height and size of the plant as we walked from field to field, thinking that before quitting Essex I might see other crops with which to compare the growth; that being the only way by which I, unacquainted with farming, could draw an inference. Our perambulation ended at the bailiff's quarters, where, by request, we inscribed our autographs in a book; and then, leaving the Devonshire men to inspect the farm-buildings, I walked away with my face towards Chelmsford.

The agricultural question, of which I had just seen an elementary part, is one of the most important which Englishmen have taken in hand to solve. The endeavours towards its solution on any single farm may not appear to be great; but taking into account the large number of farms within the four seas, the aggregate result becomes enormous. The number of acres under cultivation in England is fifteen million, of which three million are wheat, producing yearly eighty million bushels. And besides the crops of all kinds, the land maintains forty million sheep, eight million cattle, and more than four million pigs. Hence we see

by what a prodigious sum all improvements have to be multiplied. It is well that teeming heads and busy hands are always striving towards the better in quantity and quality; for much, very much, remains to be learned and studied. The principles of fertilization have yet to be better defined; and the real process by which plants assimilate and grow still requires elucidation. One man has grown turnips on a deal board; another grows wheat year after year on the same field entirely without manure, and gets a better crop on half an acre than his neighbour does with manure on a whole acre. Another grows wheat twenty years in succession on the same soil, but with manure. Here are discrepancies which must be explained and reconciled. Then on the other side of the Channel, Professor Ville has devised a method by which the land shall, so to speak, analyse itself, and demonstrate of what element it is deficient; so that having at hand the four elements of which his fertilizer is composed, any farmer could supply a field with the special one of which it might be in want. Much debate prevails on all these points, which is, perhaps, a promising indication.

On the question of live-stock, too, much remains to be determined, notwithstanding that much has been accomplished alike praiseworthy and surprising. But is it yet satisfactorily made out that house-fed meat is really better than that fed out of doors under the influence of air and sun; and is quickly-grown meat as nutritious and well-flavoured as that which progresses slowly and naturally to maturity? And with these questions there come other questions as to drains, rivers,

floods, and utilization of the sewage of towns, in all of which there is work for a hundred years to come. We can but wish success to each and all who are aiding in the work.

Already we see foretokens of the way in which the work will be carried out: by thousands of steam-engines and ingenious machines in the fields; by implements of ever-increasing efficiency in the barns and farm-yards, until the operations which have formed for ages the especial charm of rural life shall have become prosaic and mechanical as in a shovel-factory. For this trees and hedgerows are grubbed up, banks are levelled, ditches filled, and large naked fields contrived; and farms are becoming mere factories of roots and grain. But here also is matter for debate. Will our climate be affected by the destruction of foliage? will birds and small wild animals be as well able to play their part in Nature's great scheme as heretofore? or will art and artifice succeed in working up their purposes into harmony with Nature?

I crossed Tiptree Heath amid patches of gorse, fern, and brambles, and preparations for a fair at the farther end, and found a road which led me to Braxted, the seat of the Du Canes, whence there is a curious prospect of trees and slopes; broad green plains; black winding shores, and the estuary of the Blackwater. Contrasting with this, a warm wooded landscape stretches away on the right, overspread with miles on miles of farms, and diversified by frequent undulations, between which appear from time to time in the distance the curling jets of steam from passing locomotives. Among those

undulations is one distinguished by the name of a neighbouring village, Great Totham, which has been made the subject of a humorous ditty, worth quoting if only as a specimen of Essex dialect—

"At Tottum's Cock-a-Bevis hill,
A sput suppass'd by few,
Where toddlers ollis haut to eye
The proper pritty view.

"Where people crake so ov the place,
Less-ways, so I 've hard say;
An' frum its top yow, sarteny,
Can see a monsus way.

"'Bout this oad hill, I warrant ya,
Their bog it nuver ceases;
They 'd growl shud yow nut own that it
Beats Danbury's a' to pieces.

* * * *

"At Cock-a-Bevis hill, too, the
Wiseacres show a tree,
Which if you clamber up, besure,
A precious way yow see.

"I dorn't think I cud clime it now,
Aldoe I uster cud;
I shud n't warsley loike to troy,
For guelch cum down I shud."

Then the road crosses a picturesque patch of heath and descends a bold slope within sight of the spire of Wickham Bishop's that rises prettily from a wooded height on the left. The scenery is very pleasant hereabouts, and in the distance the Danbury hills uprear their range of rival slopes with advantage to the land-

scape, which however is not deficient in another kind of interest. Rivenhall, within our circle of vision to the north-east, was the birth-place of Thomas Tusser, the British Varro, as he has been called; and at Fairsted, to the north-west, he once occupied a farm, where perhaps he worked out some of the conclusions so quaintly rhymed in his *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry*. He migrated from Norfolk hither, as he tells us,—

> "to seek more health
> To house my head at Fairsted,
> Where whiles I dwelt:
> The tithing life, the tithing strife,
> Through tithing ill of Jack and Gill,
> The daily pays, the miry ways,
> Too long I felt."

One cannot help wishing that his tomb had been in some quiet churchyard of this rural region rather than in St Mildred's in the Poultry, the very centre of noise and hurrying to and fro. In the parish of Black Notley near Braintree, towards which we look northwards, John Ray, son of a blacksmith, was born, whose name and works are still held in high repute among naturalists. And nearer stands Faulkborne Hall, a fine old house, in which for a time he resided. And to the right of the town to which we are going, is Chipping, or Cheping Hill, once a Saxon market, and, as topographers tell us, part of Queen Maud's patrimony, and in ancient days a Roman station, *Ad Ansam*, as some antiquaries suppose.

There is much too in the prospect to justify the praises of old Norden, who, writing about Essex in 1594, says,—

"This shire is moste fatt, frutefull, and full of profitable thinges, exceeding (as farr as I can finde) anie other shire, for the generall comodeties, and the plentie. Thowgh Suffolke be more highlie comended of some wherwith I am not yet acquaynted: But this shire seemeth to me to deserve the title of the englishe Goshen, the fattest of the Lande: comparable to Palestina, that flowed with milke and hunnye. But I can not comende the healthfulness of it: And especiallie nere the sea coastes, Rochford, Denge, Tendering hundredes, and other lowe places about the creekes, which gave me a moste cruell quarterne fever. But the manie and sweete comodeties countervayle the daunger."

A little farther and I found a footpath which led me across the Blackwater and its bordering meadows to Witham. The little town is clean and cheerful, harmonizing well with the corn-fields and pastures that environ it. To cross a wheat-field on the way from the street to the railway-station inspires one with an unusual leisurely feeling.

I journeyed the nine miles to Chelmsford by train, and walked thence to Broomfield, a small village which has a proper village green, and a small church with round tower, said to have been built by the Danes. Just such a pleasant scene as you like to see at the end of a day's travel.

On presenting my letter of introduction at Broomfield Hall, I was somewhat surprised to hear for answer that the writer had made a mistake. But I was invited to rest awhile and take refreshment, nevertheless, and before the talk consequent thereon was over, the hospitable mistress of the house suggested that

I should profit by the mistake and tarry for the night. And if I wanted information, her husband, who would soon be in, would be ready to give me all I could desire. This happy turn of a mistake into a welcome initiated an agreeable acquaintance which I hope will be lasting.

A pleasant place is Broomfield Hall with its garden and flower-plots, arbour and shrubs; tall trees round about overshadowing the pond and its colony of ducks; and barns, stables, and sheds, and train of implements of the most improved construction, and all the appurtenances of a prosperous farm, and the little church just without the gate to complete the picture.

Presently the master returned, and heartily did he confirm the wife's suggestion. Of course I must see the farm, and out we walked as soon as tea was finished to explore. It realizes one's notion of what an Essex farm ought to be, having long ranges of cowstalls, and sending thousands of gallons of milk every week to London; the gallon being a "barn-gallon" of seventeen pints, sold at the rate of one penny a pint. Such a display of well-fed kine I never before saw, all under cover and all clean. They are milked at eleven o'clock every night, so that the milk may be sent away as fresh as possible by the morning's early train.

When we came to the fields I could not help expressing my regret at the sight of fallen trees and up-grubbed hedges. The argument that steam-ploughing would not pay except in large level fields, afforded me but little comfort, for what will an English landscape be when deprived of trees and hedges? Is so much exposure to the sun good for the land; and will

singing and warbling fill the air as now when the covert for nests shall have been cut down as a wasteful encumbrance?

"There, look at those beans," said my friend as we entered a field: "are they as good as Mr Mechi's?" I had to answer in the negative. "Come here, then;" and we went to another field: "there, are these better?"

"If bigger means better, then these are better," I answered. And the same of mangel-wurzel, which had a more flourishing appearance than that at Tiptree. "That's enough," was the rejoinder, "I only wished to show you that there are two ways of doing the right thing." Perhaps there are three ways; for a few days later in a field near Horndon-on-the-Hill I saw mangel-wurzel larger than either.

CHAPTER XVI.

A Drive to Pleshy — Roman Camp and Norman Castle — The Duke of Gloucester—A Royal Visit—A false Guest—A Journey, an Arrest, and a Death—Reminiscences from Shakespeare—A happy Supper—Engines and Implements — Farming by Steam — The Scarifier — A Lesson in Scarifying—Rustic Engineers—The Drainer—Self-sown Crop—A Drive to Dunmow—Clover and Bees—Tusser again—Little Dunmow — The old Priory—Matilda the Fair—The Flitch-winners' Chair—The Wife of Bath—The Oath — Braintree — Stisted — A round Perambulation—Broomfield Priors—Chelmsford—Picturesque Touches—Danbury Hills — The Rodney — On Foot again — About Chamberlen — Maldon — Chelmer and Blackwater—Botanical Bagman.

THERE was time yet for an exploration of the neighbourhood, so behind a fast-trotting horse we drove to Pleshy, through a district rich in fruit, grain, clover, and root-crops. At a little village we alighted, entered a grassy inclosure, where rises a high steep mound surrounded by a deep ditch which is crossed by an old bridge with a tall arch of dark red brick. Fragments of old walls appear here and there, and trees and bushes sprinkle the slopes, which are so abrupt as to suggest a notion of adventure to picnic parties who may resort to the place.

The mound is near the centre of what was once an oval Roman camp about a mile in circumference,

within which utensils and other relics of the cohorts have been dug up. The Normans took advantage of it, and in Stephen's reign a castle was built here by Geoffrey Mandeville, Earl of Essex, the keep of which, as we may believe, occupied the mound as the strongest place. It was the residence afterwards of the renowned and wise Duke of Gloucester, whose cruel fate, contrived by his king's treachery, seems to impart somewhat of a retributive character to the foul murder perpetrated in the castle-dungeon at Pontefract. The story as told by the old writers is quaintly pathetic. Richard the Second being in dread of dethronement, and in danger, as he thought, from the Duke of York and his adherents, set out from Eltham one summer afternoon to visit the Duke of Gloucester, who had often reproved the King for his errors, and, as is said, was to have ruled all the territory from the Thames to the Humber. The weather was fair and hot, and the monarch arriving at Pleshy "about v a clocke," found the Duke rising from supper, for, as the chronicler is careful to tell us, he never sat long at his meals. Straightway supper was served to the King, after which he besought the Duke to ride with him to London, pretending need of his advice on affairs of state. The Duke complying, made himself ready for the journey with a few attendants, the King graciously saluted the Duchess and her family, and the party set forth. They rode hard, for Richard was in haste to be at London, avoiding Brentwood, and so came near to Stratford, where the King spurred ahead. Immediately the Earl Marshal rode up with his posse, and in the King's name arrested the Duke, who, taken by surprise,

shouted after the monarch; but in vain. He was put on board ship and conveyed to Calais, and lodged in the castle, where one day while washing his hands in his chamber he was cruelly strangled; though his murderers reported that he had died of apoplexy. His body however was embalmed and brought to England. "The ship came up to Hadley castle on the river Thames," concludes the narrator, "from whence the corpse was brought in a chariot with little pomp to the castle of Plaisy, and laid in the church which the said Duke had there built and founded in honour of the Holy Trinity." And so "Plaisy," despite the pleasantness from which its name was derived, became a desolation; but vengeance overtook the murderers.

Shakespeare mentions the place, and in the Duchess of Gloucester's bitter interview with Gaunt, charging him with a message for her brother Edmund York, puts these words into her mouth. Bid him

> "With all good speed at Plashy visit me.
> Alack, and what shall good old York there see
> But empty lodgings, and unfurnish'd walls,
> Unpeopled offices, untrodden stones?
> And what cheer there for welcome but my groans?"

and afterwards the Duke of York at Ely House commands a servant,

> "Sirrah! get thee to Plashy to my sister Gloster;—
> Bid her send me presently a thousand pound."

It was dusk by the time we returned to the farm. We were talking over our supper when the children,

who had been out all day on a picnic at the Rodney, came home; and a happier party than we were for the rest of the evening could not have been found in the county of Essex.

Deferring for a little while my narrative of the next day's proceedings, I take leave to interpolate here a page or two from subsequent visits to Broomfield. One morning was devoted to an examination of engines and implements, a number of which were standing in the open space between the church and the garden. One of the engines fitted with enormously broad wheels would travel anywhere about the farm, and across the fields, and carry at the same time the wire rope, and implements, and indeed all the tackle required in field work. For convenience of replenishing the boiler, the engine is commonly stationed as near as possible to a pond, and soon after the fire is lighted it is ready for ploughing, scarifying, or drain-cutting. In working the scarifier, the large iron pulley is anchored on the edge of the ditch, and by arranging the rope for a lateral pull, the whole of a large field may be scarified with but one shifting of the tackle. The speed is lively even on stiff land, as I found while guiding the scarifier across a field that was baked well-nigh as hard as a turnpike road; and so took a lesson in practical farming. To and fro, to and fro, from one side of the field to the other, the implement travels, the engine hisses and clatters, and all the while the rustics are impelled to a quickness and vigilance which they would have thought impossible ten years ago. Some of them exhibit an aptitude for tending machinery which is really remarkable. Is it true, as Mr Ruskin says, that the

use of machinery in field work destroys the pleasure of the work, and deteriorates the national mind?

The drainer is an implement so contrived that in once passing across a field it cuts a groove thirty inches deep, which in stiff clay will keep open for twenty years and drain the land as effectually as a drain cut by hand. It is remarkable that stirring or ploughing the ground here but a few inches deeper than usual is always followed by a self-sown crop of charlock.

On the same day I saw a reaping-machine at work, with full opportunity for examining all its movements. It begins on the edge of a field and is driven round and round after the manner of a spiral, cutting down a broad swath, until it finishes the crop in the middle. For perfection of working it requires level ground. Seen for the first time the operation is surprising: a sentiment very different from that with which you watch the reapers bending to their work sickle in hand.

We took another drive, northerly, to Dunmow, across a gently undulating district, which abounded in such purple breadths of clover as delighted the eye with colour and the nostril with fragrance. And withal there was that low busy hum suggestive of bees and honey and well-stocked hives. And another sign of rural plenty was the number of malthouse cowls that sprinkle the landscape. If Tusser found Essex so good an example in his day of the benefit of inclosures, what would he say to it now? In his poem on *Champion Country and Severall* he writes,—

"More plenty of mutton and beef,
Corn, butter, and cheese of the best,

More wealth anywhere, to be brief,
More people, more handsome and prest,
Where find ye? (go search any coast)
Than there where inclosure is most:"

and in proof he cites Essex and Suffolk.

In Dunmow, a very quiet rural place, the inventor of life-boats, Lionel Lukin, was born. The town stands on a bold undulation, watered by the Chelmer, and if favoured by admission to a pretty garden as we were, you can get a broad view over a pleasant country which rolls away to Thaxted, the birth-place of Purchas of the *Pilgrimes*, and to the chalk hills of Saffron Walden, of which place mention is made in our second chapter. The castle there was built by the Geoffrey de Mandeville who built the castle at Pleshy.

We drove on to Little Dunmow, the place where happy probationers of a year and a day of matrimony used to claim their flitch of bacon. The old Priory, much disguised and debased by modern bricks and mortar, shows but little of its former beauty. Excepting the heads, in which some good tracery remains, the large windows are all bricked up; and the inside of the roof is hidden by a flat white-washed ceiling. Here was buried Matilda the Fair, daughter of the "Mars of men," Robert Fitzwalter, who was banished by King John, with evil purpose. Then, as we read, the King "sent a messenger unto Matilda the Fair about his old suit in love, and because she would not agree to his wicked motion, the messenger poisoned a boiled or potched egg, against she was hungry, and gave it unto her, whereof she died in 1213." The woman who opened the door showed us, as the most interesting relic, the square-

seated wooden chair in which the lucky winners of the flitch used to be carried in triumph about the neighbourhood. It must have been a very tight fit for any two of comfortable rotundity; that is, if they sat side by side.

The attempt made to revive the custom a few years ago failed, as might have been anticipated. As well might one expect to revive the pilgrimages to Canterbury, and a Wife of Bath saying, after describing how she had worried her husband,—

> "The bacon was not fet, for hem, I trow,
> That som men have in Essex at Donmow."

And would there be many couples now-a-days willing to take the grotesque oath formerly exacted of the loving claimants?

> "You shall swear, by Custom of Confession,
> If ever you made nuptial transgression.
> Be you either married man or wife,
> If you have-brawls or contentious strife,
> Or otherwise at Bed or at Board,
> Offended each other in deed or word;
> Or since the parish clerk said Amen
> You wish'd yourselves unmarried again;
> Or in a twelvemonth and a day
> Repented not in thought any way;
> But continued true in thought and desire
> As when you join'd hands in the quire.
> If to these conditions without all feare
> Of your own accord you will freely sweare,
> A whole gammon of bacon you shall receive,
> And bear it home with love and good leave;
> For this is our custom at Dunmow well known,
> Though the pleasure be ours, the Bacon's your own.

From Dunmow our drive was extended to Braintree, a small town that weaves silk, and has an aspect of business, on the little river Brain; and thence I walked, always across pleasant undulations, through Stisted* and Greenstead to Earl's Colne, and so rounded my perambulation of the heart of Essex.

We return now to Broomfield.

On the morrow of my first visit, my friend drove me to Broomfield Priors to breakfast. This was the house to which my letter should have been addressed: a house of the olden time, which looks as if it could not shelter inhospitality, with gables outside, and queer ups and downs, and nooks and closets inside; but with comfortable capabilities of the old-fashioned sort. And on the edge of the garden a portion of the old moat still remains; and the garden is so full of roses that one's senses are as much delighted therein as they would be in the rose-gardens of Damascus. And the farming corresponds with this floral excellence; and, as at the Hall-farm, abundant use is made of mechanical appliances.

After breakfast the Priors' gig was brought to the door, and its owner drove me to Chelmsford, a respectable-looking town, which derives its name from its situation on the river Chelmer. As it was yet two hours too soon for market, my friend proposed to drive me by a pretty route a few miles on the way to Maldon, from which town I had planned to take a walk through the lowlands of Essex. The route was pleasant. Nowhere in the county did I see such picturesque groups of

* The *i* sounded as *y*.

barns, sheds, and stables, such slopes of old brown thatch, patched with blue and gray, and tiled roofs that seemed almost on fire with their coating of bright orange lichen standing broadly up in the sunlight, or peeping from masses of foliage, as hereabouts, on our way to the Danbury hills.

And when the ground began to rise, we entered cool, deep ferny lanes, up which the horse travelled at a walking pace, allowing us full enjoyment of the sight of old mossy stems, overhanging branches, and hangers of fern on the steep banks, and of the all-pervading freshness and fragrance. "When my wife and I were on our wedding excursion," said my friend, "I remarked to her that we saw nothing so pretty as these Danbury lanes." Then we emerged upon a road that crosses the top of the hills, and caught a glimpse of the village of Danbury amid the ample woods that adorn the brow, and looked upon the broad view which opens far to the south. They who built the palace of the bishops of Rochester on this commanding height conferred a benefit on the diocese, for who, with such a fair prospect to gaze upon, could ever become perverted in his spiritual vision?

A little farther, and we came to a rough, much-broken heathy summit, chequered with bushes and gravel-slopes that descend to the shelter of trees. And that was the Rodney of which I had heard so much during my first supper at Broomfield. A more delightful place for a day's holiday could not easily be found. No wonder that the children came home in such excellent spirits, or that now and then a party travels down from London for a day on the Rodney.

Soon afterwards we descended to a main road, where my friend bade me farewell and trotted back to Chelmsford. I paced off in the opposite direction between hedges that bloomed with honeysuckle, on the way to Maldon. During this walk of six miles I got broad views of the flat country, and had below me on the right the village of Woodham Mortimer, a place held in honour by obstetricians, for it was once the residence of their renowned Chamberlen. The forceps, of which he was the inventor, were discovered by accident in 1813, one hundred and thirty years after the inventor's death under the floor of a closet in his house, where they had been deposited with other relics. Some enthusiastic practitioners have made a pilgrimage to the village, and described their master's house and tomb. The latter bears a long epitaph, the spirit of which may be inferred from the first two lines,—

> "To tell his learning and his life to men
> Enough is said, by here lyes Chamberlen."

Maldon is built on a long hill that sinks down to the estuary formed by the confluence of the Chelmer and Blackwater. It has two churches, restored fourteenth century, at the upper end; old red brick, heavy and massive, near the lower end. Small sloops and many tan-sailed barges are moored in the stream, some laden high with straw. The banks are low and intersected by muddy creeks, and heaps of shells bestrew the shore, and noise and a smell of tar prevail where boats and sloops are building. Tame-looking though it be, this estuary has played an important part in British history, if, as the Astronomer Royal argues, it was here

that the Romans landed for their successful invasion of England in the reign of Claudius. That a Roman camp was established at Maldon, lends some weight to the argument. On the farther side lie the marshes stretching away to the Colne and the flat country which we crossed on our way to the Naze. About a mile to the north are the remains of Bileigh Abbey, where Bourchier, Earl of Essex and Lord Treasurer, was buried with Lady Isabel his wife. The chapel is now used as a dairy.

I dined at the *King's Head* with a 'commercial,' who happily had learned manners, and could find time for botany as well as business. With plants by the wayside and his books, he told me he made his evenings and his journeys alike interesting.

It was here at Maldon that Mr C. Buxton once ended a speech to his constituents with these remarkable words:—"The talk talked in Parliament during the last three hundred years has talked England into being about the happiest, richest, and best-governed country in the whole world."

CHAPTER XVII.

The Hundreds—Change of Scene—Latchingdon—A Word about Tiptree—Where be We?—Althorne—Remarkable Prospect—Twenty-seven Years' Overtime—Fairyland—Burnham—River Crouch—Oyster Beds and Boats—Poachers—The Company—A Talk about Oysters—Dredge and Dredging—Culling over—Enemies—Tricks of Trade—Beds of Skultch—Young Oysters—Singling—Sowing—Essex Breeding, Kentish Feeding—In Season and out of Season—An Invitation—Another Start—River-side Aspects—The Ferry—Foulness—Muddy Landing—Fat Fertility—Foul Roads, Fair Paths—Three Ways to Shoeburyness—Eastwick Head—The Oversands Way—A Dreary Scene—Spectral Commerce—Nothing much to speak of—The Broomed-out Way—Creeky Shore—The Maplin—The Nore—Wakering Stairs—River-bank—Strange Aspects—Shoeburyness.

When Essex folk talk of going down into the Hundreds, they mean the flat lands, lying between the Colne and the Crouch, which are remarkable for abundant crops, good inns, and evil agues. Children born in those parts used to be spoken of as tadpoles; and by playing upon a word, the owner of five or six cattle was made to appear as having five or six Hundred cows: a jest thought very lively in the flat lands. The goodness of the inns was accounted for by the 'commercial' at the *King's Head* in this way: "You see, sir," he said, "the people have no scenery to tempt

them out of doors; the climate makes them seek for the more comfort in doors, and that 's the reason, in my opinion, why you find the best inns in the county down there."

So I started from Maldon, and descended the gradual slope to the Hundreds with a reasonable expectation of comfortable night-quarters. From the distance of about a mile the town, if you look back, appears somewhat picturesque—a mass of houses relieved by spire and towers, stretching along the crest of a ridge. The eastward view is a broad level, where fields, farms, and pastures diversify the foreground, and blend far off with a faint blue haze. Shall we thank God there are no more frightful hills to ascend, as a certain traveller once did on quitting Derbyshire for the fens? or shall we make a solace of sentiment, and persuade ourselves that Latchingdon, with its new church, new school-house, and *Lion Inn*, answering to description, is just such a village as the locality requires? or as the cannon-roar travels to our ears across the levels from Shoeburyness, shall we congratulate ourselves on the invention of Armstrong guns?

"I be going your way a bit," said a farmer, who leant against his gate smoking his after-tea cigar; and as we walked side by side I told him of my visit to Tiptree. "So you ha' been to see Mechi's farm, have you? and what did you think of it?"

My answer may be inferred from what is set down in foregoing chapters. The farmer replied, "In course you can't give a farmer's opinion; but we can, and we do n't take in all that 's told us about Tiptree. It 's all very well, you know, for Mr Mechi to be always a-

preachin' about farmers not being willin' to make improvements; but the truth on 't is we be just as keen to make money as he is, that we be. All that we wants to know is—will it pay? That 's where 't is. Because you see, we ain't like Mr Mechi, we ain't got a shop in Leadenhall Street to fall back upon; and if we spends a couple o' hundred pound over some improvement, and it do n't answer, where be we?"

Not badly argued, I thought; and presently, when we came to the corner of a meadow where the farmer had to look at a cow, he held out his hand for a shake, as if sure of sympathy.

Here at Althorne a gentle ascent interrupts the level: it seems not worth notice, but on coming to the top you are pleasurably surprised by a remarkably extensive prospect. The Danbury hills rise in the north-west; Chelmsford is discernible; the Blackwater and the Crouch are both within sight; the uplands of Kent appear bold and blue, beyond a watery expanse, where spreads the estuary of the Medway, while farther yet sparkles the broad blue sea. It is a prospect which you will pause to contemplate, and perhaps seek to widen by mounting to the top of Althorne church-tower, which stands on the summit of the ascent. That great stretch of salt-marshes is not without interest to one who remembers the history of the past, for there the Dane established himself more than once, and built camps and strongholds, whose remains are still to be seen; there came the citizens of London with a fleet and harassed the invader, while the natives of the county or Alfred's troops attacked him on the landward side. Southwards, beyond the Crouch rises

Canewdon—Canute's Hill—where the Danish king had an entrenched camp partly on the site, as we may believe, of an earlier camp of the Romans. It overlooks Ashingdon, where, more than eight hundred years ago, he defeated Edmund Ironside in a great battle.

On the brow of the last slope I fell in with a labourer, who, with spade on shoulder, was trudging to an evening's work in his quarter-acre. "For seven-and-twenty year," he said, after we had had a little talk, "I 've walked back'ards and forrards a matter of two mile to my 'lotment, every day; leastways when there was any work to be done. Sometimes I 've been that tired I could hardly get home, but I did n't like to give up; and now I do n't feel comfortable like if I ha' n't been down to my little bit o' land. I be grown fond on 't, you see; and sometimes I thinks its fond o' me." Twenty-seven years of overtime! Is not such humble perseverance worthy a passing notice?

The sun was setting as I descended the slope. The broad tame salt-marshes which lay below then put on the appearance of a fairy-land, veiled by a soft purple haze; and the golden lights quivering here and there on tree-top and gable seemed the brighter as the shadows darkened in their rear. But gradually the illusion vanished, and when I came to Burnham, marsh and meadow looked cold and dusky brown.

Perhaps a good inn needs no sign, for the *White Hart* has none. You will find it, however, on the quay facing Wallasey Island, and a clear river, the Crouch, which at high-water appears as a broad, green arm of the sea, pleasant to look on at early morn from your bedroom window. And as Burnham has oysters

to sell, and demands coal for the supply of the Hundreds, you see coal brigs of three hundred tons, a few schooners, a fleet of herring boats, some dredging, some at anchor, and the coast-guard hulk clean as a lighthouse, and distinguished by the Union Jack. The folk are proud of the river and of their quay, and you will perhaps be told, as I was, that there is depth enough for a ninety-gun ship—at high-water.

But there is more than meets the eye. The bottom of the Crouch, for a distance of eighteen miles, is a breeding-ground for oysters. Sail up the river to Fambridge Ferry, or down to Foulness, and you will see oyster boats at work, of from eight to twenty tons' burthen, dredging in season and out of season; at one time gathering for the market, at the other busy with the "education" of the delectable mollusk: ostreoculture, as some have it. Including the inspector, and the police, who look after poachers, there are nearly one hundred men employed, who earn each from fifteen to seventeen shillings a week, and are supposed to work twelve hours a day; "but," as my informant said, "they have a habit of knocking off at certain conditions of wind and tide, though their pay goes on all the same, and they always quit at two o'clock on Saturdays." They are employed by a 'Company' of five individuals, who rent the grounds under Lady St John Mildmay.

One of the five, whom I met with in the bar-parlour, was as willing to answer as I was to ask questions. "People sometimes write to me," he said, "wanting to know all I can tell them about oysters; but I won't write; can't bother myself with writing.

But I 'll talk to them or to you, as long as you like."

Taking the Burnham fishery as an example, oysters figure to an important amount in the trade of the county. To maintain the watch against poachers in the Crouch and adjacent creeks costs £600 a year; and about £300 a month are paid in wages and other expenses, besides the annual rent. On the other side of the account appear 1400 bushels sent during the season to a well-known dealer in Cheapside, but a small item in the hundreds of millions which London annually consumes; 7000 bushels to Companies across the water, in Kent, and 10,000 bushels to Ostend and Dunkirk. To estimate these quantities rightly, we must remember that the oysterman's bushel measure will contain nearly two imperial bushels.

The dredge is a flat bag of oxhide, which being pierced 'lozengy,' looks like coarse network, attached to an iron mouth-piece. An indispensable condition of its use is that a moderate breeze shall be blowing; it is then trailed by ten or fifteen fathoms of line at the stern of a boat, and by scraping along the bottom becomes filled with oysters, when it is of course hauled on board and emptied. Then, as the catchers say, they must be 'culled over,' and the small ones thrown back into the river. Under proper management none are taken under seven years of age; but as oysters are eatable at four years many thousands are hurried to a premature end. Poachers too steal the young broods, and will sell for five shillings as many as if left to maturity would fetch five pounds. They are liable, moreover, to attacks from enemies against which the

watchers are powerless; the sea-urchin, the five-finger, and the whelk-tingle, or stinging-whelk, as the Whitstable fishermen name it, are as fond of oysters as the late George Dando was. This latter, a *trochus*, attaches itself to the shell, pierces a small hole, and sucks out the delicate morsel from within. Many an empty pair of shells brought up by the dredge reveals the work of the spoilers. Floods too are hurtful, and fatal if the quantity of fresh water brought down be very great.

Shell-fish generally thrive best when let alone. Not so with the oyster. Your true ostrea requires and repays a course of nursing. In a free river—the Blackwater for instance—the quality is said to be inferior to that of beds carefully preserved; and it is well known to 'the trade' that coarse and poor oysters are trimmed and shaped to look like the better sorts, with which they are dishonestly mixed. An important part of the nursing consists in the preparation of proper beds for the deposit of the spat or spawn; because unless the embryo can immediately attach itself to some rough or uneven surface, it becomes abortive and floats away. Hence from time to time the men throw into the river what they call 'skultch,' which an outsider would call rubbish, for it is composed of broken tiles, pots, and pans, shards of all kinds, old boots even, all intermixed with empty shells. Of such stuff as this a comfortable bed can be made, presenting so many points of contact as to insure the detention of the spawn, which is cast in July. In the following month the young oysters are discernible sticking fast to the skultch in confused clusters, in which condition they are left for two or three years, when being about the size of a shilling,

they are taken up to be 'singled;' a process of separation which not only favours their growth, but, as one of the men said, "improves the shape of 'em wonderfully." They are returned to the bottom, and after a while are dredged up once more to be distributed among the beds up or down the river, or in the creeks which require replenishing, being thrown in broad-cast from a shovel, and there they lie till fit for the market. Large quantities are sold and carried across to be 'sown' at Whitstable; for it is a remarkable fact (if true) that while the oyster breeds freely on the Essex shore of the great estuary of the Thames, it will not breed on the Kentish shore. Yet as a nursery Kent has the advantage, so that oysters sent from Burnham to be laid down on Whitstable Flats will, when mature, excel those preserved in their native waters. It is the practice, as I have heard, to deposit different sorts on special parts of the Flats, which would seem to imply a peculiarity of character in the oyster, not unworthy the attention of the breeder and the naturalist. The best of the Burnham oysters are named after two reaches of the river in which they are found: Holywell Lane, and Rozier; both near the mouth.

The flat muddy shores of Essex are the more favourable to the breeding of oysters, as they are intersected by numerous creeks where beds may be laid, and it is found that a small admixture of fresh water with the prevalent tidal current improves the quality of the oysters deposited therein. Ice on the surface is not injurious, neither is frost except to beds which may chance to be left dry by the ebb; but snow water is fatal to oysters, as well as to fish of other kinds.

The popular notion that oysters are in season only during the months whose names contain the letter *r* is justified by facts, and it would be well if it were strictly regarded. For with the approach of May they begin to sicken, their colour changes to milky white, and they become so plump that an unpractised dredger would suppose them to be in their very primest condition. The whiteness changes to dirty gray, and this to black, by which time July sets in, when the spawn is cast. "You see, sir," said my talkative acquaintance, "it takes the oyster two months to prepare for spawning, and two months to recover from the operation, and you may say it requires a little rest besides. So any one who knows what an oyster is, will tell you 't is really prime only from October to March. But what can you do? Cockneys *will* have 'em, we are obliged to send a few every week to Cheapside in August; people in the big manufacturing towns *will* have 'em; and the poachers are always willing to supply the demand in season or out of season. And then just think; for every oyster taken up in May and June before the spawning there is a loss of thousands. Nice stomachs they must have who can swallow oysters in May or June."

It may be that we shall have some day a Royal Commission to inquire into the causes of decrease in the supply of oysters, and to recommend measures for their multiplication, as we have had in the case of salmon. If demonstration be wanted it may be found, ample in degree, along the coasts of Brittany, where numerous large beds have been laid down by authority of the French government and with profitable results.

The skultch in these instances was bundles of faggots fastened down upon the shoals.

It was drawing towards midnight when the 'Company' rose, and with his good-night gave me an invitation to walk round his garden in the morning, and to witness the operation of dredging by a trip in one of the boats.

The morrow opened bright and hot as if summer had really come at last; so that I enjoyed the more my stroll in the large pleasant garden, and a regale of fruit. But as with the heat there came a dead calm, which put a stop to the dredging, I lost the promised sight of that, to me, interesting operation. I waited till the forenoon was well advanced, when, seeing no sign of a breeze, I set off for Foulness, wishing if possible to cross by the sands from that flat and fertile island to Shoeburyness..

Viewed from the river-bank beyond the end of the quay, the town presents a not unpleasing picture; at once respectable and quiet, rural and maritime, sprinkled with foliage, and seemingly inclosed by trees from the broad meadows and fields on the verge of which it is situate. It gives one the impression of a place where a man may be at peace; and I thought while looking at it, that many a jaded citizen could there find the recreation which he seeks in vain in some noisy watering-place, or in some long excursion which under the name of pleasure wears him out with hurry and anxiety.

How delightful it was to have a real summer day interpolated into that ungenial season; to feel the hot sunshine, the soft yet glowing air, and to hear the

hum—the hum of summer—pervading marsh and pasture, field and meadow, in the air and on the water; to see how the insect-world woke at once to life and activity, and exercised its wings as happily as if brilliant days would never end! My walk had thereby a charm which I had not anticipated.

The height of the bank gives our eyes a wide range, and enables us to see aspects with which we are now familiar; comfortable-looking farms, rich meadows, here and there a belt of reeds, and, as the tide is ebbing, of slopes of mud. Look down on the bank itself as it curves with the stream, and we see how its features vary: here for a few rods it is covered with meadow-barley, that short grass which we used to pluck when school-boys and insert under our jacket-sleeve; there it is gay with oxeye, bedstraw, rest-harrow, and thistles; then a sprinkling of sloe bushes; then beds of thrift, and patches of crimson and purple and pale green, where grow the goosefoot, glasswort, and sea-purslane.

I passed the mouth of the river Roach, which falls into the Crouch and separates Wallasey from Foulness, and, at about four miles from Burnham, came to a black sea-weedy point, off which an oyster-boat lay moored. Presently the two men pulled in with their jolly boat and rowed me across. The vessel, they told me, was a watch-boat, their duty being to warn poachers off the oyster-bed which they had just finished 'sowing,' and of which the extent was marked out by slender poles stuck down into the mud. They are relieved every alternate month, during which they do similar duty in a boat up the river. There is no compulsion

on them to convey passengers across; but they do the work out of goodwill, and for a fee of fourpence.

Foul, indeed, I thought as the stern of the boat was brought to the landing-place and I stepped out upon a row of lumps of chalk there imbedded in the mud, and so thickly covered with the slimy deposit that to keep my footing was impossible. Five or six times did I slip off ankle-deep while crossing the broad slope to the bank; and I thought that an enemy attempting to land in the estuary of the Thames at low water would not find it easier than our seamen and marines did one fatal June day in the Peiho. Can it be true that the island takes its name from fowl, of which it once had abundance?

Once on the bank, I saw a difference between Foulness and the shore I had left: there is more tillage, and the appearance of the crops denotes unusual fertility. But there is withal a strangeness of aspect: the trees and houses are few enough to be counted; the fields are bordered by stagnant ditches; the roads, if such they may be called, are more like a stripe of a stiff clay-field ploughed very deep in the olden time, and left to itself ever since, than to anything else that I can liken them. How the inhabitants drag their wagons and carts through such a tenacious alluvium after heavy rains is perhaps a question which they alone can answer. The best thoroughfares are the principal footpaths, which being firmly coated with broken shells and small gravel from the beach, afford good walking over a country that must have been at one time well-nigh as impassable as the Slough of Despond.

The 'town' consists of two small groups of houses: Church End, and Court End, a mile apart. To walk direct to one or the other appears to be as troublesome as in the fens: the ditches wind continually, and the paths wind, leading you by any but the shortest route. By turning hither and thither, however, you see all the aspects of the island, especially the long curves of green or yellow scum in the drains, from which bubbles of gas rise continually, and where insects swarm as if in ecstasy. Now you skirt a field of beans, where the pods are large and plump; now the path crosses an acre or two of lucerne, now mustard, now turnips, now a meadow, now a 'ma'sh,' as the natives have it; all alike flat and stiff of texture. At times while stopping to look round you will fancy the isle to be a big muddy dish, of which the bank, running all round about twenty miles, represents the brim.

Having made my way to the church I found, as is not unusual, a *George and Dragon* not far off, where information could be got as well as bread, cheese, and good Essex ale. It was about ten years ago that Foulness began to have a proper place of worship, and the church still looks fresh and new.

There are three routes to Shoeburyness: you may cross to Wallasey Island and thence take a highway, or follow the Foulness 'road' to New England creek, a muddy creek, which you may cross in the coast-guard boat, should it happen to be there: if not you may bivouac and wait a day or two till the boat comes, and as there are two other creeks beyond, and no bridge, the inducement to try that route is not encouraging. The third way is to start from the

'heads' in the sea-wall and tramp four or five miles across the Maplin Sand. "You can't miss the way," said the landlord, "for it 's broomed out; and there won't be much water in the runs from the creeks by the time you get there. It 's pretty muddy just as you get down on the heads, but nothing much to speak of."

He told me further that the passage could be made from half-ebb to half-flood by any one who did n't mind wading. There had been accidents between whiles: a policeman in the preceding winter who would cross after dark because he knew the way so well, was found drowned on the sand next morning. "But strangers somehow do n't get into trouble; they 're more particular in asking about the tide."

In the half-hour's walk from Church End to the 'heads,' I passed from tilled fields to marshy meadows, which are parts of the island most recently reclaimed. There stands the last cottage with its one tree, and the toilsome track is seen stretching onwards to a depression worn by wheels in the engirdling bank that hides all view of everything beyond.

Remembering what cheerful walks I had had on breezy leagues of hard level beach, my anticipation of an over-sands walk to finish with, was that of renewing a pleasure. But on coming to the hollow place in the bank, known as Eastwick Head—the 'heads' above-mentioned—where the track descends on the outer slope, I saw a prospect which looked anything but pleasant: a vast expanse of brown sand, rough with ripple marks, whereon no dry spot was visible, while the track for the first furlong at least seemed to be

sludge. To right, to left, and far as eye could see forwards, the aspect was that of a damp desert, for the low shore of Foulness curves inwards so much on the right that you can hardly believe there is land in that direction, while to the left, and towards Shoeburyness, the gradual rise in the great waste shuts out the farther prospect, and gives you a horizon of sand. I stood for some time contemplating the dreary scene—dreary even in sunshine—and saw that a wayfarer overtaken by the tide would have but a poor chance of escape, seeing that the sand dips towards the bank into a trough of mud, which the water fills before parts farther out are covered. And while I stood I became aware of a distant busy murmur, an eager far-away throb, as it seemed, and straining my eyes through the haze perceived at length the masts of ships and of steam-boats, and the smoking funnels gliding, as it seemed without support, in two directions beyond the great brown curve of the sand. It was the throb and murmur of commerce. There, beyond the Nore Light, stretch great shoals many a league to seawards; there, crowding the channels, go the ships forth from the Thames; and there from all the ports of the world crowd the thousands of ships seeking the world-renowned port of London. Could those spectral-looking objects, I thought, be indeed the evidences of a mighty reality?

I took off my boots, bared my legs to the knees, and stepped into the sludgy track. It was something to ascertain by actual experience that mud varying from six inches to a foot in depth is "nothing much to speak of" at Foulness. I struggled through it to a rude

beacon-staff, about a furlong distant, and there saw what was meant by the road being "broomed out," for from that spot the way is shown straight as an arrow by a row of besom-heads standing 20 or 30 yards apart, and kept in place, as you might fancy, by their handles stuck down perpendicularly into the sand. Near the beacon the mud gives place to firm sand, but so wet and overspread with shallow pools, that you will perhaps find most pleasure in continuing barefoot. Looking a little ahead, you fancy that there the ground is quite dry, but come to the place and you find all alike plashy: everywhere ripples and pools and millions of worm-casts. Under these circumstances you may divert yourself by a repetition of the deceptions, or by imagining the number of cockles that breed in the broad region, or by counting the flocks of white birds that here and there sprinkle the surface. The sight of a "broomed out" intersecting cross-track is felt to be a relief.

The course of the runs is shown by hollows in the sand, stretching from the mouth of Shelford Creek, New England Creek, and Havengore Creek, the latter being the deepest: an example of Spenser's "creeky shore." The tide was at its lowest, consequently I found but a few inches of water in each one. After passing them you come to the part of the sand which formed the sky-line, seen from Eastwick Head, and hence you begin to see the rough edge of the main shore stretching away to the dark low point of Shoeburyness.

Now the land of Kent is discernible: there stands the Maplin beacon; there floats the Nore Light, sixty

miles from London; there is the "measured mile off the Maplin," where vessels of the Royal Navy test their speed; there the great war-ships anchored in the mouth of the Medway loom the bulkier because of the thin haze; and the heavy sound of firing rolling thence, proclaims the Volunteer Artillery practice at Sheerness.

Two miles farther along the line of brooms and the track approaches the bank, and the foreshore is relieved by low grassy promontories and islets, and by patches of the green, yellow, and tawny vegetation that beautify a salt-marsh; and here and there by small clear pools, convenient as a foot-bath before putting on one's boots. Then the track ascends the bank at Wakering Stairs, so named from the village of Wakering, about a mile inland—a wheel-worn hollow, in front of which the mud is really nothing much to speak of. Near it stands a post bearing a notice to trespassers, at sight of which I could not help saying to myself, "As if anybody would ever want to trespass on such a dreary sand as this!" At all events, there were no trespassers at the time I crossed, for not a soul did I see except a man driving a cart in the last half mile.

The tide had begun to rise before I left the sand, and while looking back from the top of the bank I was not a little surprised at seeing large breadths of sand covered with water which five minutes before lay bare and brown; and acre after acre disappeared at a rapid rate. The great tidal wave sweeps down from the Orkneys to the mouth of the Thames in fourteen hours, and rises at the Nore nearly sixteen feet. Hence for some hours before high-water the whole of the Maplin resembles a sea.

The bank sends off a branch or two, but I kept the outer line, finding it high enough to command wide views over land and water: the latter still widening with the same surprising rapidity. Here and there on looking across the land, mounds are discernible which are said to have been used in ancient times before the marshes were reclaimed, as places of refuge and look-out. The outer slope of the bank is protected by a layer of chalk and rows of stakes, while in places the foreshore is overspread by large beds of that stiff bluish-green grass (spiked cord grass), which seems to be one of Nature's appliances in the formation of salt-marsh. And here and there a narrow fringe of clean sand, sprinkled with shells, makes us aware that we are not yet beyond reach of the salt sea.

Still the mighty throb and murmur come across the league of sand from the highway of keels, contrasting somewhat strangely with the quiet of our path, and the strange aspects of a district within three hours' journey of London. A little farther and the landscape on our right becomes diversified by trees, where among the comfortable-looking homesteads we note one with a quaint high roof and cupola. Then the bank ends; and we have a loose beach of sand and gravel, wherein the shells of cockles, mussels, whelks, and periwinkles are intermingled in amazing quantities; then a breadth of looser sand and marum grass, sprinkled with sea-holly, which reminds us of the toilsome shore of Norfolk; then great heaps of coal landed from barges for the use of brickmakers; then a rough road carried up a slope on the right, and beyond it a high bushy bank fringed with trees, from the top of which soldiers are

looking down on their comrades sauntering or swimming below, and farther, a jetty projects where barges unload, and a flagstaff rises on what looks like a battery: all of which are signs that we have arrived at the artillery camp of Shoeburyness.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Commandant—The Camp—Huts and Houses—Lecture Rooms and Laboratories—School of Gunnery—Batteries—Long range Targets—Granite Target—Iron Target—Smash and Crash—Solid Butts—*Royal Albert* Target—Burst Shells—Awful Havoc—Right of Way—Swimmers—A Capital Place—Sunday in the Camp—War and Worship—Swords and Guns in Church—The Sunday School—River-side Walk—Outskirts—Southend—School of Jelly-fish—Pier and Promenaders—A Two-shilling Dinner—Minories or Bethnal Green—An Ugly Ride—A Storm—Dissipation.

I WALKED on to the battery and returned thence along the bank into the camp, considering how best to get leave to gratify my curiosity. "Nothing like going at once to the chief," I thought, and having a letter of introduction in my pocket to an officer who was not at the camp, I sought the quarters of Colonel Taylor, the Commandant. He received me courteously, and on hearing my explanation, and the expression of my desire to see everything when out on a holiday, gave me leave to witness whatever operations were "down on the book" for Monday, and encouraged my curiosity by the remark, "You are quite right in trying to see all you can." I take pleasure in here repeating my thanks for his favour.

This matter settled, I went to look for quarters for myself. The young town now growing just without the eastern gate of the camp, has one inn, much resorted to by labourers and soldiers, where I found a decent bed-room, bad London beer, and a lack of propriety in the victualling department. However, I there laid aside my knapsack and went out for a stroll before sunset.

The camp is situate on a gravelly bluff which forms the northern point of the mouth of Thames, looking directly across to Sheerness. The situation is excellent: open to the saline breezes, having a soil that dries presently, even after twenty-four hours' rain; broad level meadows in the rear convenient for military exercises; a good beach for bathing in front, and an expanse of sands whereon to practise at the longest range of Armstrong guns. The Danes, who appear to have been as good judges of a site as the Romans were, had a camp here, the entrenchments of which remained traceable for centuries after.

At the time of my visit the camp had quarters for two hundred and fifty men, comprising rows of low wooden houses which have become not uncommon in England since the fall of Sebastopol: stables, hospital, storehouses; officers' quarters and mess-room standing apart; the residence, a good brick house, of the Commandant, gardens, and much more required by the especial purposes of the place. Shoeburyness is a school of gunnery, second, as the authorities believe, to none in the world: hence there must be sheds for the guns, workshops, laboratories, magazines, lecture-rooms and offices, and space enough for a large park of artillery.

These edifices are built for permanent use, whereby you see more of brick in the camp than wood; and as regards space, the Government, foreseeing a growth of the establishment, have purchased two hundred and forty acres of land adjoining.

The batteries are erected on the brink of the stream west of the camp as you go towards Southend. They are low structures, obviously built for work, not for show, and are so well placed that, as you may see from the parapet, they command leagues of sand at low water, stretching away even to that dreary Maplin. There at different distances—eight hundred, a thousand, fifteen hundred, or two thousand yards, stand the targets, half buried at high water: screens of stout oak plank, about twelve feet square, resting nearly perpendicular on the sand, supported by a couple of rails. That temporary arrangement is found to be better in practice than a fixture.

A casemate is built in the rear of the batteries, and beyond that are (or rather were) a series of targets of another description. One represents a portion of a granite battery, constructed in the strongest possible way; but the big solid blocks are much shattered and splintered, driven out of place, showing, even to an unprofessional eye, that a few more rounds from the sixty-eight pounder that commenced the mischief will hammer it into a ruin. Another has a front of iron, and sixty-eight pounders peering from port-holes, and by way of experiment presents a face of alternate splays and flat surfaces to the cannon-balls. There is no lack of proofs of what can be done, for you may see here and there in hollows of the bank, heaps of slabs of wrought iron four

inches and a half thick, broken up as if they were but crockery. Some large slabs which are bent almost into a basin seem to have been driven in as easily as the crown of a hat yields to a blow of the fist. In contrast therewith, by reason of newness and unblemished surface, stand two massive butts, eight feet thick and nearly as much in height, constructed of oaken balks, each a foot square, strongly bolted together, and secured to a strong foundation. The word concerning them is that Sir William is to batter one and Mr Whitworth the other. We may judge beforehand of the result, by examination of the section of a *Royal Albert*, from outside to midships, which has been built on the bank as a target for a newly-invented shell, fired from a distance of two hundred and fifty yards. The havoc is perfectly astounding! The side is riddled with holes made by the missiles as they flew true to the mark; holes small by comparison with the size of the shell; but the interior tells a fearful tale of the destruction caused by bursting shells. The whole compartment is bestrewn with splinters of wood and scraps of iron in such quantity and wild confusion, as to give the beholder a very vivid and terrible impression of what would take place on the explosion of a shell between decks. On the outside you see a number of small holes within a circle of about five feet, so truly have the missiles struck their mark; ragged holes through which your fist would hardly pass without touching. But inside the holes open widely and are surrounded by what may be described as a thicket of splinters, while the deck and bulk-heads are in many places torn to rags, and great beams of a foot cube are driven from their place though held by thick

screw bolts, and large pieces are gouged out of them to more than half their thickness. The climax of the mischief is around the spot where a shell burst while actually in the side: it would not be easy to describe. It is an almost inconceivable instance of the effect produced within a small compass by an explosive compound. What frightful slaughter had this been the deck of a real ship crowded with men!

All this might have been seen by any one, for there is no attempt at mystery; besides which a public right of way through the camp, interrupted only during the time of firing, enables visitors to witness the results of the interesting experiments here carried on. For sojourners at Southend it is a pleasant walk to the Ness; I saw many during my visit, among whom some of the privates got small silver fees for their explanations. But when the batteries begin to speak then the sentries are ordered to forbid the thoroughfare.

It was high water when I returned through the camp: numbers of the men were bathing, and as many more looking on from the bank. The best swimmers were greeted with lively applause, and became the more emulous; and two, notwithstanding the strong tide, swam out to the floating target five hundred yards distant; seated themselves thereon for a few minutes to rest, and then swam back to the shore. "It 's a capital place for us," said one of the men with whom I talked; "our appetite 's as good again as 't was at Woolwich."

Sunday morning opened with the sweet influences

of summer: a blue sky, a hot bright sun, a cool breeze that enlivened the water with ripples and woke up the slumbering music of the trees; and quietness prevailed. I went to church in the camp. The service, commencing at nine o'clock, was held in the large brick building which, well lighted from the roof, comprehends a lecture-room, and a large space where gun-drill is carried on in bad weather. This latter was the church, with white-washed walls, a bare earthen floor, and on one side three or four big guns—sixty-eight pounders. Perhaps if the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" had been written up, the incongruity would have been complete. A temporary floor was formed at one end by targets laid on the ground: targets serve sundry purposes at Shoeburyness; flooring a church is one; others are the extemporising of stables, sheds, spare-rooms, or a guard-house, therewith, almost as readily as houses can be built with cards.

Use and not show prevails here as well as on the batteries. The reading-desk was of unpainted pine; on each side were rows of chairs, those on the right occupied by the Commandant, the Colonel, and other officers, and well-dressed ladies; those on the left by non-commissioned officers and their families. Facing the desk on cross benches placed beyond the targetted floor, sat some half-a-dozen rows of rank and file. A serjeant in uniform officiated as clerk. The service, read by a clergyman of the neighbourhood, was rendered the more impressive by excellence of reading, and a rich sonorous voice well under command. A few hundreds of such readers dispersed through the Church of England would remove some of her present reproach.

It sounded strange to hear the words of prayer and thanksgiving in a place which held the deadly engines and appliances of war, where, as the men sat down, their swords made a great sound, rattling and clanking against the hard earthen floor. However, a devoutness of manner prevailed among all present, and there were no signs that the sermon, preached from the text "The Lord will be with me when I am awake," was regarded as too long.

The rank and file kept silence the whole time, to the detriment, as I thought, of the singing, for it lacked strength and volume. One of the officers to whom I afterwards mentioned this defect, answered that the men remained too short a time at the camp to be able to sing together, being ordered away on the completion of their course of instruction, and replaced by others. He said further, on my remarking upon the incongruity that had struck me between the material and spiritual uses of the place,—"Ah! the authorities seem to think that a soldier can get to heaven with very little religion, or else perhaps they would build us a church."

Immediately on coming forth the clergyman drove off in a chaise to hold a morning service in his own church, about four miles distant. His afternoon service there would be followed by another in the camp; the latter quite gratuitous. Four services on a Sunday, under such circumstances, denote an exemplary earnestness of purpose. Before the noise of his wheels was lost in the distance a sweet sound of children's voices singing a hymn broke from one of the wooden houses near at hand. "There's my Sunday school," said the

Commandant, "I must go and see how they are getting on."

The walk of three miles to Southend, as above remarked, is pleasant. You leave the military ground at about half a mile west of the camp, at the wicket where a sentry-box is the most constant guard. Thence the way lies along a beach of shell and gravel, or its rough margin of marum and stone-crop. On the right the country, rising with a gentle acclivity, has a cosy, sheltered look; on the left flows the great river not less crowded with ships dropping down with the tide than on the days when all "manner of work" may be done. Presently the path mounts, and runs along the edge of a clay cliff above the shore where adventurous excursionists bathe. Inland lies Rochford, a name that reminds us of Newton's country; and behind it spreads the district where, as old Norden describes, "The great and huge cheeses were made, wondered at for their massiveness and thickness." Then the usual outskirts appear; cottages, shrimps, ginger-beer, marigolds, two or three boats and two or three anchors which seem to belong to nobody. Then groups of Londoners sitting about on the sand or grass; and rows of houses facing the water; streets running up the landward slope; a large green which preserves some of its natural features; the *Ship Hotel* and pretentious lodging-houses in the rear; the wooden pier running out a mile and a quarter towards Sheerness; and then a sudden rise to a bold high bluff, where stylish terraces are building, and the *Royal Hotel* looks proudly forth, and a church invites to worship and the railway-terminus

to locomotion. Sprinkle the bluff and the rear of the town with trees, and the picture of Southend Old and New will be sufficiently complete.

The pier is an agreeable promenade, for the water is clear and the bottom gravelly, and it stretches so far out that many sights can be observed in the sea, which seldom occur near the shore. I saw a school of jelly-fish float slowly past the pier head, with the convex side of their disk in advance, propelling themselves—as it seemed to me—by an alternate expansion and contraction of the disk, appearing now like a saucer, now like a bag. Then the steamer arrived from London, disembarked a number of passengers, and steered across to Sheerness. Not a few availed themselves of the railway train which runs from end to end of the pier.

Desiring to witness the behaviour of visitors indoors as well as out, I dined at an ordinary which was open to all comers at two shillings a head. The viands were good, but the damsels who waited pert and inattentive. Some of the guests who asked for beer had to fetch it for themselves from the bar. After the meal most of the party gathered in groups about the small tables and began to smoke and drink. Presently the talk became flippant and noisy, especially around the tables where bonnets appeared among the heads. "Look at them," said a lady who sat near me, to her husband, "they come out of the Minories, I'm sure."

"Either that or Bethnal Green," answered the husband, between two whiffs of his pipe. And soon after, turning to me, he remarked, "A queer lot, them, sir! I wonder they come down here, for it's the ugliest ride, I should say, in all England. I looked

out as we come along this morning, and there was nothing at all to see."

What says Cowper? "The wretch who can derive no gratification from a view of nature, even under the disadvantages of her most ordinary dress, will have no eyes to admire her in any."

Then a sudden thunder-storm came on, with exceedingly heavy rain, which made the gaily-dressed throng out on the pier-head alter their opinion as to the pleasantness of that breezy resort. Without umbrellas or any kind of shelter they presented a pitiable spectacle as they broke up and came swarming shorewards—men, women, and children; the storm all the while blowing in their faces. It was such a baulk to a day's pleasure as perhaps made some of them wish they had gone to church. An hour later I walked up to the railway-station to see what might happen to be going on thereabouts. The spacious refreshment-rooms were overfilled with the damp and bedraggled excursionists, and with very small exception, the whole throng showed signs of folly and dissipation, disgraceful alike to them and the railway authorities. Quiet-minded folk who went home in the trains that evening deserved commiseration.

CHAPTER XIX.

Gun-sheds—Double Quick—The Armstrongs—Sorts, Sizes, and Workmanship—Park of Artillery—Lecture-Rooms—Bad Firing demonstrated—Working Parties—Judging of Distance—Lesson in Gun-Mounting—Severe Labour—Quick Result—The Mess-room—Lesson in Gunnery—Teaching the Officers—The Range-Party—Loading—Flag!—Strollers in the Way—Fire!—A Miss: A Hit—Volunteer Target Raisers—Change Rounds!—Dirty Work—New Bores and Old Bores—Buzzing in Ears—About a Precept—Southend—Pleasure Traffic.

At nine the next morning I was pacing to and fro near the gun-sheds which flank one side of the park of artillery, assured of one favourable element towards the day's operations—sunshine and a gentle breeze. Presently a company of men came across the green at 'double quick,' and fell in opposite the office. They all wore white duck jumpers and trousers, and officers the same, for the camp is a school where every one must do real work and learn hard lessons. Two of them were ordered to fetch out the fifty-yard chain, and then away they all marched to the rough pastures in the rear.

Punctual to the hour the Commandant arrived. He led me at once to the guns—twelve-pounder Armstrongs—which stood on the floor of the sheds, and

explained their construction and mode of action. I had seen the original nine-pounder at Elswick, as has been mentioned in a former book, and was the more interested in seeing a number of larger pieces, all so nicely finished, that to call them beautiful as well as formidable would be no misapplication of terms. It would be easy to fill whole pages with description, but a few words will suffice for our present purpose. Instead of being fixed to its carriage as other guns are, the Armstrong gun rests on a slide, whereby the strain and shock that in other cases accompany the recoil are neutralized; it has graduated sights so fitted as to insure accuracy of aim; by means of a rack and crank it is elevated and depressed or traversed with a facility that becomes the more admirable when contrasted with the now partially obsolete handspikes and quoins of ordinary gun-practice; the bore, instead of being perfectly straight and circular, is 'rifled,' that is, it has a slight corkscrew twist; the shot is cylindrical, and being set a-spinning by the twist as it leaves the gun, flies the more truly to its mark; and, lastly, the gun is loaded not from the muzzle, but at the breech: an important improvement, inasmuch as the gunners are less exposed to the enemy's rifle-bullets while loading at the breech than they would be at the muzzle.

Besides nines and twelves, I saw a forty-two pounder; a ponderous gun, and not ugly; and of ordinary guns ranged along three sides of the park, with ammunition wagons and other appliances, there were more than I cared to count. Of shot and shell, cartridges and fuses, and the other appliances used in gun-

nery, there was of course ample store, nor were chemical compositions lacking. In the lecture-room set apart for officers there are all the parts and forms of shot, shell, and fuse, and with these before him the lecturer explains the relation between time of flight and length and quality of fuse, and the conditions of success. In the large lecture-room, the walls are covered with diagrams which illustrate the flight of projectiles, and make apparent to the eye of the men in what bad firing really consists. In another place are samples of the various ropes and the knots required in actual service. With material aids such as these and competent instructors we may reasonably expect officers and privates to become skilful and learned in all the essentials of artillery practice.

During this survey other parties of lightly clad men had come down at the 'double' to go through their several courses of drill, and the scene near the batteries was one of laborious activity. Leaving these for the present, we walked down to the meadows to look at the first party. They were exercising their eyes and their judgment of distance. Lengths of fifty yards had been measured off by the chain, and the men told off in twos to stand at each length, 'uncovering' as they receded, that is, each successive pair standing a little to the left of the one next in front, so that all could be seen at once up to a distance of five hundred yards. There they stood motionless, while a group of officers and some of their comrades observed them heedfully, noting especially the difference of appearance with increase of distance. Owing to the light clothing, the faces appeared more distinctly defined

than any other part of the person. Some of the party could distinguish features at five hundred yards, but these were very few: three hundred seemed to be the average range of distinct vision. To my eyes a face became hazy at one hundred yards. Sometimes the men wear their blue uniform at this exercise, and the brass buttons on the jackets are found to be good test-objects. The separation between them becomes less and less discernible, till at three hundred yards the row of buttons appears as a line of bright metal.

We returned to the batteries, where the Commandant handed me over to the kind offices of Colonel Gardner, and charged the officers who stood by to take care of me at luncheon-time. Here two parties were going through a course of heavy gun-drill—sixty-eights—which tested their strength and ingenuity not a little. The two carriages were supposed to be broken or disabled by the enemy's shot, and the men were required to remount the guns on sound carriages without the 'gin' or triangle which, commonly used in that laborious operation, renders it comparatively easy. First, a sound carriage was hauled up from the rear and placed immediately behind the broken one, and there made fast. Then by means of handspikes and main strength the gun was lifted a few inches, wedges were slipped in beneath it, the muzzle was depressed sufficiently to allow the placing of a short thick roller under the breech; the handspikes were set to work again, and so with clever applications of lever, wedge, and roller, and now and then a touch of severe lifting, the huge heavy piece was shifted to the other carriage. At once the injured carriage was hauled

away, and the gun was dragged forward to its place, ready for action.

How the men worked! as if each one felt that success depended on his individual exertions. By dint of practice each knew what he had to do, and did it at the right moment: capital evidence, I thought, that much more is required than mere firing and loading to constitute an artilleryman. After a pause Colonel Gardner gave the word for a repetition of the operation, watching keenly all the movements, and mingling now and then with his instructions a word of caution to the men. "They cannot," he said to me, "have too much practice in this drill, for they may have to go through it some day in the face of the enemy, when every second is of consequence, while a cloud is passing the moon. In such circumstances a minute gained in time would perhaps save two or three of my best men from the enemy's sharp-shooters."

"If they can only work under fire," I answered, "as they work now, you will not have to complain of their being too slow. Look at them: there is not one that leaves his share of the work to be done by a comrade."

"No," replied the Colonel, "they like the work, though, as you see, it is very hard. I am obliged to caution them now and then, when they are straining their utmost under the dead weight, for fear of a rupture. And though they work like that, you will see them within half an hour after their drill, two miles away on the sands, catching shrimps, cockles, or mussels."

Presently the dinner-hour struck, and all hands

withdrew, leaving only the sentries on guard. Adjoining the officers' mess-room is a library, where newspapers are read as well as books. The same spirit appeared to prevail over the luncheon as over the work: no one lingered. Some went away to a game of quoits; some to *The Times*, while others grouped themselves on the grass, lying, sitting, standing, to be photographed by a brother officer.

At two o'clock there was a general movement to the guns and batteries; and now I had a promise of some real firing, unlike the forenoon drill, which with some parties comprehended only the several movements of loading and dumb firing. Two Armstrong guns were brought to one battery, the forty-two pounder was placed at another, two ordinary nine-pounders were mounted on another, and each was recorded by its number in a book, as the army regulations require that an account of every gun shall be kept showing how many times it has been fired. In like manner every charge, shot, and shell expended during the course of instruction is carefully registered.

A number of officers assembled on the battery to take a lesson in Armstrong-gun-practice. They 'fell in' at the word of command from the Captain-Instructor; but did not keep 'silence in the ranks,' for they poked fun at one another, and laughed, and one or two expressed a particular desire to know "what had become of Dismal Jemmy."

"Now, who 's the youngest?" asked the Instructor; "you, Noyes. We 'll begin with you, and the others shall take their turns by seniority. Go up to the stable, ask for a horse, ride out on the sands, and

consider yourself as our range-party. Take up a station about a hundred yards to the left of the target, notice where the shot falls, how many feet short, or over, or on either side, and enter it in this book. To do this you will of course ride up to the target after every shot. When you see our flag up we are going to fire; when down we are not going to fire; when half-mast, you will come in. Now, away with you."

Noyes took the book and walked off. "Come, double," cried one of his companions after him; so, at the double he went till he passed out of sight behind a wall. Presently we saw him mounted and moving across the sands to the thousand-yards target, but at such a tardy pace, that you might have thought he had apprehensions of becoming himself the target.

Meanwhile the officers were told off seven to a gun: four took their places by the piece itself, and three by the ammunition in the rear. One brought the shot, another the cartridge, to the foremost party, who loaded the gun, dropped in the breech-piece, gave two turns with the winch, made a thrust with the pricker to pierce the cartridge, pushed in the fuse; then having taken aim, one stood ready to fire with the lanyard in hand.

"Flag," cried the Instructor, and immediately the bombardier, who stood ready, hauled the colour to the top of the staff, and posted himself at the telescope, which stood close by, mounted on a tripod; the officers stepped aside to the corner of the battery, some with their two-eyed glasses in hand, leaving only Number One at the gun.

While all this was going on, a pleasure-boat

grounded on the sand below the battery, and was there left by the falling tide. The passengers waded through the shallows, and joined by strollers from the shore, they sauntered about in groups, and took no notice of the shouts that warned them out of the way. At last the Instructor, losing patience, said to the Commandant, "Look, sir, there they are just in our range."

The chief looked for a moment, and answered, "Never mind, they won't stay there long."

"Fire!" Down came the lock on the fuse, and simultaneously with the flash, smoke, noisy roar, and whistling scream of the flying shot, the officers raised their glasses to their eyes, the bombardier stood fixed at the telescope, and away scampered the strollers helter-skelter in all directions, some even into the water, imparting a touch of the ludicrous to a severe incident. No more complaints were made of their straying into the range.

But as to the shot, we all saw it strike the sand near the lower right-hand corner of the target.

The one who aimed is asked for his opinion as to where the shot fell: how much short, over, and so forth. His answer is noted in a book to be compared with the report of the range-party. The officers generally say what they think of the question, and the bombardier at a word or look from the Instructor declares his opinion.

"Fire, Number Two!"—flash—whiz—roar, and rushing scream, and the target fell.

The bombardier hauled down the flag, and we saw Noyes riding up to the fallen target to make his notes,

but so deliberately that one of the mess said, "Is he going to a funeral? If that 's to be his pace, we shall be kept here all the afternoon."

The top of the bank in front of the camp, being a good place for observation, is commonly thronged with men watching where the shots strike, though they cannot see the batteries from that position. Unwilling that their excitement should be interrupted by the fall of the target, three or four of them started to replace it; and just as orders had been given to aim at the seven-hundred yards target, we saw them emerge from behind the trees and tramp across the sands on their voluntary errand.

"Change rounds," cried the Instructor, and the gentlemen whose post had been by the ammunition, took their places by the guns, while the others stepped to the rear. Thus each one becomes familiar with all the details, which is an important matter in actual service, for if but two of the seven remained unharmed, those two would be able to "fight the gun."

Now the guns required sponging. The sponge was dipped into a bucket of water, and thrust into the bore from the breech. When withdrawn and held erect black streams trickled down the pole, making a "pretty pickle," as some one remarked, of the officer's hands who held it. "Ah!" said the Commandant, who then came up; "you have found it out already: a foretaste of war. It 's the dirtiest work a man can have to do."

So it went on, firing and changing rounds. Meanwhile the nine-pounders were firing round shot, and the forty-two pounder was shaking the whole at-

mosphere from time to time with its tremendous roar, and Colonel Gardner was busy with his parties on the edge of the park. If a man wishes to get a notion of the bodily labour, the mechanical operations, the art and science involved in gunnery, let him pay a visit to Shoeburyness.

The practice with the nine-pounders afforded means of comparison: it was not so good, though at a shorter distance, as with the Armstrongs; and taking aim by the use of handspikes was demonstrably more difficult than with a small crank, and at the same time very slow and laborious. The longest range—fifteen hundred yards—was taken by the forty-two pounder; but on this occasion accurate aim was disregarded, the object being to test the strength of different qualities of powder.

By the time some five-and-twenty rounds had been fired, my desire was satisfied and my hearing somewhat deadened; so, having expressed my thanks wherever due, I hooked on my knapsack, and walked away with a painful buzzing in my ears, which continued for three days.

What I had seen set me thinking that of late years we have been doing our best to fulfil one half of the historical precept, and keep our powder dry. But as to the other half—Trust in the Lord—has it not in the same degree fallen into neglect? To follow the second half of the precept only is manifestly unsafe. The newspapers often print solemn warnings of what may befall us; but let England have a cause for which she can fight with a clear conscience and real trust, and enemies may come on in any number they will. Such,

at least, is a belief in the heart of many an Englishman.

As I walked through Southend, I saw on the green a party of Londoners playing at kiss-in-the-ring; a detachment of the multitudes who on Sundays and Mondays swarm forth from the great hive, and make up no small portion of that which the Chairman of the Southend Railway Company describes as the life of the line: "the pleasure-traffic."

CHAPTER XX.

Three Routes to the West—Leigh—The Rays—Pleasing Prospect—Lord Mayor's Limit—Canvey Island—Rayleigh and Hadleigh—Restorer of Navigation—Benfleet—Danish Pirates—Fobbing Marshes—Stanford-le-Hope—Horndon-on-the-Hill—Langdon Hills—Imposing View—A Charm and Reminiscence—Capricious Ague—Tilbury—City Men—The Fort—Royal Inscription—Bastions and Inner Works—Gunpowder Alley—Ague again—The Blockhouse—Gervase of Tilbury—The Armament—Hot Shots for Invaders.

A CHOICE of routes from Southend to the westwards lies open to one who travels on foot: the sea-wall between the railway and the river; a footpath that rises and falls and bends hither and thither along the margin of fields above the railway, and the turnpike road on the crown of the heights. There are views to be seen, especially from the upper routes, on which your eye will rest with pleasure, and perhaps surprise, if you be one of those whose idea of Essex has never admitted the possibility of beauty. Take the field-path, and by the time you have walked the three miles to Leigh, you will acknowledge that Father Thames beholds landscapes at the place of his farewell, which may remind him, though faintly, of cheerful

scenes where the uplands of Berkshire look down on his winding stream and pebbly shallows.

Leigh is a strange-looking place, inasmuch as it combines characteristics of a sea-port and river-port. Fishing-boats and barges lie before it at anchor or aground with lazy lurch; the most are shrimp-boats; for here are caught a large instalment of the 25,000 bushels of shrimps sold yearly at Billingsgate.

The salt tide laves the shore, and at the ebb acres of mud and sand are laid bare, divided by two slimy channels: the inner one Leigh Ray; the outer one Hadleigh Ray, or Benfleet Creek, as the fishermen call it. The hill-foot approaches so near to the water's edge, that road, railway, and houses are pretty closely crowded between. You begin the steep ascent immediately from the station, and find the acclivity sprinkled with houses at different elevations, and the best on the top in rear of the church.

Hereabouts would be an agreeable sojourn, for the walks are pretty and the prospects extensive. Gazing from the top of the church-tower, I saw the broad estuary, with its unceasing throng of ships, widening still as it descends till it merges into the quick glimmer of the green sea at the bend of the coast to the north-east; and Kent rising bold and blue beyond the expanse of water, and resting apparently on the low flat stripe formed by the Isle of Grain which lies immediately opposite. Draw a line across from a little below Leigh to the mouth of Yantlet Creek in that low Isle, and you mark the limit of the Lord Mayor's jurisdiction as conservator of the Thames. And here, off the Essex shore, lies Canvey Island, which reminds

us of Sunk Island in the Humber; a tract of marsh and meadow about two miles wide and five in length, partly embanked to keep out the tides, which is chiefly remarkable as having been mentioned by Ptolemy, as old topographers say, under the name *Kononos*. Westwards Gravesend is discernible, and eastwards Shoeburyness, and when the sun drops low, dismal Sheerness becomes visible in the south-eastern horizon, touched by the golden beams. The country around is well cultivated and diversified by wood. Prittlewell is within sight, and Rayleigh, and Hadleigh spire and castle: the latter a ruin on the slope above the railway, which runs straight as a dart to Benfleet. Far beyond the ruin, a greenish blue height reveals the situation of the Langdon hills, whose summit commands a delightful prospect, as we shall by and by see.

The clerk speaks respectfully of the present Bishop of Moray and Inverness, who, while vicar of Leigh, some twenty years ago, repaired and repewed the church, and built the school-house, and now comes once a year "to see the old place." He, the clerk, remembers how the inside of the church looked before it was altered; but knows nothing of the antique hour-glass stand which, according to tradition, remained fixed to the pulpit down to a comparatively recent date. Perhaps Robert Salmon, whose bust, after the manner of Shakespeare's, adorns the northern wall, and who was a "great instrument of God's glory, and the Commonwealth's good, and the restorer of Navigation," could describe it to us, and tell of sermons which were still far from 'finally' at the turning of the glass.

A few minutes later and I caught a hasty glimpse from the train of the not unpicturesque remains of Hadleigh castle while passing, and came to South Benfleet, a tame place, yet with touches of river-side character about it. If the prospect of Canvey has tempted you to a visit, you may cross over from here by a causeway, or if you prefer a peep into the Past, you may see that redoubtable Sea-rover, Hasting, taking up a strong position at Benfleet, after his expulsion from Kent by Alfred's masterly tactics. Not strong enough, however, to resist the attack made thereon by Ethelred, son-in-law of the king, and Eolderman of Mercia, at the head of provincial troops and citizens of London; for it fell into his hands with much spoil, and the invading chief decamped with his followers, marched across to the Severn and established a winter camp at Quat, as we noted while contemplating the view from the castle-terrace at Bridgenorth.

The train moves on: the railway makes a deep inward curve to avoid the swamps of Pitsea Creek, and Fobbing marshes, which stretch away to Thames Haven: a feeble place with a branch railway and intermittent pleasure traffic. A few miles farther and we stop at Stanford-le-Hope, a village pleasantly situate on an eminence not far from that broadening reach of the river known as The Hope. It has a church worth looking at, standing on the brow, amid an environment of corn-fields, whence you get a good view of Horndon-on-the-Hill.

I made haste to walk thither, wishful to mount yet higher before sunset. About half an hour sufficed. I left my knapsack at *The Bell*, and started afresh for an

hour's walk on the road to Billericay, which presently begins to rise, and becoming lane-like, with high hedges and honeysuckle blooms on each side, mounts to the top of the Langdon hills. I got over a gate, and rambled about knee-deep in fern, among the ash, oaks, and elms that adorn the summit, seeking the best points of view.

The height is not great—three hundred and eighty-eight feet—but the prospect is vast: one that occupies the eye and fills the mind with quiet pleasure. Forty miles of the Thames and its estuary lie before you; Shooter's Hill appears as a rounded mass in the distance; the Crystal Palace and St Paul's can be seen in favourable states of the atmosphere; and when night comes on the dwellers on and around the Langdons see the glow of London in the distant sky.

Eastwards, broad levels, brightened here and there by the gleam of a creek, contrast with the great undulating slope that rushes down to meet them. Westwards there stretches away to a pale blue distance, over a region thickly bestrewn with villages, an apparently endless succession of farms and fields, alternate patches of green and yellow, and over all the landscape the warmth and softness prevail that belong to wood; and this wood closes the north-western horizon with forest-like masses. Trees grow thickly on the flanks of the hills themselves, and in places you look between the stems as through a long glade, down upon the scene beneath. You may wander about at will, discovering pretty nooks and secluded hollows and open knolls; and on the left of the road a cool clear spring close by a copse where the ground is half hidden

by ferns, and the sky by the graceful foliage of the birch.

For me, there was an additional charm—that of sunset; and I sauntered, now in a broad stream of the golden light, now in some hollow where it flickered through the maze of branches; and when I came forth to retrace my steps, the sky looked glorious with its array of ruddy clouds. And there was the further charm of reminiscence; for my first ascent of the Langdon Hills was made many years ago in company with a friend who, far removed from the rural scenes of Essex, has dwelt since then in a smoky northern town, amid the noise of countless spindles. "Ah! for the change 'twixt now and then." Now we both say with the poet:

"Think with youth how gay of yore
We made sunshine out of shade;
Think with him how light we bore
All the burden sorrow laid.
All went happily about him,
How shall we toil on without him?
How without his cheering eye,
Constant strength inbreathing ever,
How without him standing by,
Aiding every hard endeavour?
For when faintness or disease
Had usurped upon our knees,
If he deign'd our lips to kiss
With those living lips of his,
We were lighten'd of our pain,
We were up and hale again.
Now without one blessing glance
From his roselit countenance,

We shall die deserted men,
And not see him, even then."

On my return to *The Bell* I had a talk with Mrs Spurgeon, the hostess, while she folded the great heap of newly-dried household linen that filled the room with the scent of grass and hedgerows. One of her topics was her family connections with the famous preacher; another, the recent occurrence of cases of ague in Horndon. The like had not been known for years. It was natural enough to expect ague at Pitsea, and such-like places, but on the Hill it was unaccountable.

Leaving Stanford by an early train the next morning, I came to Tilbury just as the steam ferry-boat arrived from Gravesend with a throng of passengers, mostly city men eager to reach their offices by ten o'clock. I walked down to the landing-stage to see them disembark; and whether it was my own holiday freedom from care, or that the signs of worldliness are most noticeable out of London, I could not but be struck by the general anxious expression of the faces, too firmly fixed to be removed by a 'blow' on the river or a night out of town. Among all that passed me as I stood leaning against the rail not one displayed a beaming eye or really happy feature.

When they had departed I walked down to the Fort. Here, as almost everywhere along the Essex shore, the ground is so flat and low that it would be flooded every day by the tide were the strong thick bank or 'river-wall' overflowed or breached. Hence Tilbury Fort appears but a low insignificant place to steam-boat passengers who view it from the river.

Seen from the land it has an aspect of solid serviceable strength, which would perhaps encourage the patriots who dread invasion. At the entrance is a gate of palisades stout enough to stand as beams; and an embrasured wall rises towards the river, lined by a thick mound of earth, against which a sentry paces to and fro. A little farther and you see the gate-house of the inner court; a specimen of seventeenth-century brickwork, curiously ornamented. An inscription, *Carolus II. Rex Anno Reg. XXXIV.*, runs across the front, wherein we may suppose either the architect wished to exhibit his loyalty, or the authorities to ignore the invigorating episode of the Commonwealth. The sentry posted at this gate challenges strangers, and forbids entrance except on business.

The officer being absent to whom my letter was addressed, Colonel Kelly, the commandant, kindly granted me permission to view the fort, and referred me to the master-gunner, whose duty comprehends the guidance of visitors. A more instructive guide could not be desired.

The main body of the works comprises four bastions, two resting upon the river, two looking inland. They are solidly built of brick, and are connected one with another by a curtain strengthened inside by a thick bank of earth, along which you can walk from south-west round to south-east. The bricks are of different periods. Were any of them made at the factory of bricks and pantiles which Defoe set up here not far from the fort?

Within you look down on a spacious drill-ground, the quarters of the garrison, store-houses, maga-

zines, and the pretty gardens and large green lawn that front the officers' quarters. This area is divided by a fenced alley running straight across: gunpowder alley it might be called, for along it are wheeled thousands of barrels and boxes of British thunder, from lighters in the river to the capacious magazines, and contrariwise. I saw a party of Irish militia, kept from straying by the double line of fence, passing to and fro with laden and empty trucks, discharging lighters which had come from Woolwich. Whenever a vessel at Woolwich is in want of ammunition the powder is sent back thither.

From the landward batteries you can overlook Tilbury Marsh and the broad levels that here extend between the uplands and the river; the ravelin or outer line of defence, and the broad moat which embraces three sides of the fort. You see sluices and drains by which, in case of need, the whole district could be laid under water, all under the care of a sluice-master. The moat is refilled occasionally from the river, and in its placid depths lurk many fine fish, which furnish sport to the residents. A mound on its northern bank has the appearance of having once been a bridge-head, and there are signs in the curtain wall opposite of an old sallyport, bricked up. Notwithstanding the pains bestowed on drainage, the whole neighbourhood has a marshy, aguish look, corroborated by a few yellow faces among the garrison, and the fact that quinine is in request. Even within the fort the ground is so yielding that on placing the heavy guns in position, the feet of the 'gin' or triangle, by which they were swung, sank two feet beneath the surface,

forcing down the broad plank shoe on which they rested.

On the side towards the river stands a low massive block-house, with walls enormously thick, said to be a relic of the days of Henry VIII. When news came that "Castile's dark fleet" had been seen steering up Channel, a chain was stretched across the river from this to the block-house at Gravesend, and troops and munitions of war were despatched in all haste to Tilbury. The rising ground beyond the marshes to the northwards is pointed out as the place where Queen Elizabeth reviewed the army there encamped under command of the proud Earl of Leicester. And glancing farther back into the days of King John, we may recall Gervase of Tilbury and his chronicle.

The fort has an armament of sixty-eight guns, the largest of which weigh ninety-three hundredweights. The contrast between these and the original nine-pounders, some of which yet remain peeping from embrasures near the entrance, is striking. At present the nines are only used for salutes; the big guns, sixty-eight pounders and eighty-four pounder howitzers, are to do the quarrelling if ever the need should arrive. When you stand on the south-east angle and observe how completely they command the long vista of Gravesend Reach down nearly to East Tilbury, you will infer that the Thames is not so defenceless as certain editors, who are always afraid of the French, would have us believe. Besides, a fort at East Tilbury, and another on the opposite side, at Shorne, sweep the Lower Hope; a fort stands at the head of Sea Reach, on the Kentish shore; Gravesend has a fort on its eastern border; and

with all these the passage of the river would be made very uncomfortable for an invader.

The guns, clean and well kept, bore testimony to the care exercised over them by the master-gunner: no rust ever appears where he does his duty. The process of cleaning was nearly finished at the time of my visit, and men were scraping some of the huge pieces with old sword blades, in preparation for the coat of oil which gives them an appropriate and serviceable complexion. The condition of the magazines was not less commendable, with their stores of powder, of boxes containing murderous shells, and their ranges of 'side arms,' that is, rammers, sponges, and so forth.

All this was to me very interesting, as much from seeing the fitness of means to ends as from an undercurrent of thought concerning ultimate uses. I perambulated from bastion to bastion, and the whole line of the outer defences, and the covered way, and finished with a peep at the master-gunner's quarters, up a steep stair in the gate-house. In a subsequent visit I saw the old block-house in process of pulling down, and noticed that the bricks in the interior of the walls were soft and friable; which seems a contradiction to the notion that none but excellent bricks were made in the sixteenth century. I saw also a row of the furnaces in which iron is melted to be fired in hollow shot against the enemy. They are harmless-looking things: an upright cylinder for the fire, supported on an iron frame that runs on low wheels, and carries a large vertical wheel which, turned by hand, sets a rapid fan in motion, and raises a powerful blast. The action is so

intense that in ten minutes a supply of the red-hot fluid is ready for distribution.

The master-gunner spared no pains in the gratifying of my curiosity, and did not refuse to drink a "civil cup" of good Kentish ale with me at *The World's End*, and rounded up his civilities by accompanying me to the railway station.

CHAPTER XXI.

Prospect of Gravesend—Gray's—Chalk-pits—Copious Springs—Cunobelin's Gold-mines—Purfleet—Government and Mr Whitbread—Pleasant and Picturesque—Chalk Cliffs and Cosy Nooks—View to the Forest—Inside the Wall—Agreeable Quarters—The Powder Magazine—No Admittance—A Ticket for Botany—Sansum—Beacon Hill—Shady Paths and Open Prospects—Greenhithe and Erith—Floating Reformatory—The great River and Throng of Ships—Rainham—Dagenham Lake—Summer Residence of Elizabeth Fry—River Wall—Dagenham Breach—The Marshes—Resort for Anglers—Barking—The Bell Tower—The Abbey—More no More—Region of Ings—River Roding—Barking Creek—Lonely Walk—East Ham—Gallions Reach—Musing—The Last Walk—Change of Scene—Drainage Works—Antiquities and Echoes—North Woolwich—Gipsy Camp—Plaistow Level—London over the Border—Undesirable Tenants—Vale of Lea—The Danes—Queen Maud's Bridge—Eastern Suburbs—End of a Holiday.

The line runs across the pastures within sight of the river, and of Gravesend on the opposite shore rising boldly from the straggling array of masts, house above house, to the summit of Windmill Hill: a spot well known to Londoners. A few minutes, and we stop at Gray's Thurrock, commonly abbreviated into Gray's; another of the queer little river-side ports, situate in the bend between Fidler's Reach and Northfleet Hope. Tarry here an hour or two, and walk to the chalk-pits,

and see what great excavations have been made, and how busily the laden trucks run from the pits to the river, to satisfy the shipmasters' never-failing demand for chalk as ballast or cargo. You will see what copious springs there rise to the surface, and flow away in an uninterrupted stream to the Thames: so copious that some parts of the excavations can only be kept accessible by constant pumping. There is enough to supply the eastern division of London with pure water. As you go towards Little Thurrock you may see excavations which have long been known as "Cunobelin's gold-mines" and "Dane-holes;" and are conjectured to have been hiding-places or granaries: a question on which conjecture is very likely to be mistaken.

A few minutes more and we have crossed West Thurrock marshes and arrived at Purfleet; a place well worth a visit, as we shall see on alighting. It occupies the only high ground on the Essex side between London and Gravesend, and is remembered by steamboat passengers as a pleasant-looking place, nor does it disappoint expectation on a nearer view. To me, and doubtless to others, its especial charm is that it is not overbuilt or cockneyfied. "It belongs," as the gatekeeper at the Botany will tell you, "to Government and Mr Whitbread, and neither of 'em allows any houses to be built." Long may their prohibition continue; for a pleasanter spot than Purfleet for a half-holiday is hardly to be found within the same distance of London. One of the great rounded hills composed of chalk, gravel, and clay which prevail with such pleasing effect in other parts of Essex, here advances boldly upon the Thames, and having been largely excavated in past years, now

greets the visitor with touches of the romantic and picturesque among its quiet features.

Honeysuckle and pretty flower-gardens beautify the village, as we see while walking through to the western height, where a long high wall, marked W. D., incloses the Royal Powder Magazine, a great tall tank, and other properties of the War Department. Following this wall we come to a brow which on the right terminates in a high bold cliff, whence we can look down on such fruitful well-sheltered gardens in the hollow beneath, on such cosy meadows, with the little chapel standing among them, and on peaks and bluffs of chalk and pinnacles of clay, as will at once inspire us with a most pleasing impression of Purfleet. And by gaps here and there in the hedge we can pass to the jutting points of the cliff, and survey the scene with advantage, and on Sundays hear faintly the simple music of the psalm sung by the village congregation in the chapel below.

If from the road we look in the opposite direction, we can see far away in the north-west the wooded heights of Epping Forest, and one or two houses which, gleaming white amid the trees, mark the situation of Havering-atte-Bower; and a little lower the gray spire of Hornchurch: a prospect which connects the first of our wanderings in Essex with these the closing scenes of our holiday. And looking across our foreground, we see how the broad slope of the hill descends to the green levels that stretch onwards to Rainham and places beyond which we have yet to visit.

Walk down the road a little way, and mount thence by the shady avenue to the north-western gate, and you

will see what a pleasant place is inclosed by the forbidding-looking W. D. wall: one half of the hill, with fine tall trees, and the storekeeper's residence on the summit; gravelled walks, a great green slope sweeping down to the river; the guard-house; a big bell on a tall post; a curious old domed gate turret; offices and barracks, in which, at the time of my visit, seventy men were quartered; a seat and arbour on a lower level, and a row of strong palisades along the edge of the shingly beach.

The Powder Magazine is at the foot of the slope, sunk, as it seems, into the mass of the hill. In a momentary opening of the door at the end I saw a sentry pacing up and down between the front wall and the range of gables which show their peaks to passers-by on the river. Never having seen the inside of a powder magazine, I thought that the opportunity might be favourable, and applied to the storekeeper at his residence for permission to visit; but he had no power to admit without an order from the chief authorities.

There is yet another height to visit. We call at a house near the hotel for a "ticket for Botany," and retrace our way through the village to a gate in the wooded bank which stretches riverwards from the railway-station. A man who passed seeing me try to open the gate said, "If you wants to go in you must holler Sansum." So I called "Sansum," and was presently admitted by an ancient man, who came from somewhere among the foliage, and led me forthwith to an alcove screened by trees, and pointing to the W in the smooth pebbles of the floor, said, "That stands for Whitbread; and the other two, H. P., are for Henry

Palk, who was the librarian to the House of Commons." I remarked that it was very kind of Mr Whitbread to admit the public to such an agreeable place, and the ancient man replied, "Yes, it is kind. There 's nothing to pay, only Mr Whitbread do n't object to a small present to the gatekeeper, as a sort of acknowledgment, you know, for the free admission." It was impossible to withhold a sixpence from such a simple-minded way of stating the case. Besides, once past the alcove, you may wander at will.

This, in local phrase, is "the Bot'ny:" the height, for the most part thickly wooded, is Beacon Hill. You may ascend to the top by gradual slopes along the front, or by sharp steep zigzags on the flank, where the chalk has been hewn away, leaving cliffs nearly a hundred feet high, and in some places detached masses, now stained and weather-worn. The extent of the excavation shows how large has been the demand for chalk for ballast, and to get out flints for the gun-flint factory once established here. The lower recesses, overspread with soft grass, are delightful playgrounds, shaded here and there by small plantations, and backed by a fruitful orchard. The slopes bear oak, fir, ash, and hazel, and a thick under-growth with all the tangle in which Nature delights; so that you may find walks to suit your mood, from the quiet gloom of the rearward slope, with peeps into fields, to the open paths of the front. On the summit stands a small lighthouse, built by the Admiralty, some years ago, for experimental purposes, whence the prospect is striking and animated. It takes in the whole length of Long Reach down to Greenhithe, and up the Rands to Erith and Cold Harbour Point, in

the other direction. Immediately opposite, Dartford Creek, containing the united waters of the Cray and Darent, falls into the Thames; half a mile higher the marshes advance and form Crayford Ness, and the distance is relieved by the woods which so agreeably diversify the broad county of Kent. On the hither side Purfleet is seen lying in a sort of amphitheatre formed by this and the barrack hill, the railway curving through; and at a short distance from the bank, floats the *Cornwall* reformatory ship, with boys at drill on deck or in the rigging. And always there is the throng of vessels: great merchantmen from India and Australia; swift liners from the States of North America; timber ships from Canada; plodding traders from the Baltic and Scandinavian ports; lumpish schuyts with eels and flat fish from the Netherlands; mail and merchant steamers from Constantinople and the Adriatic, from Havre and Antwerp, from Hull and Newcastle, from Leith and Aberdeen; Admiralty despatch-boats trim as racers; perchance a war-ship with pennant flying: and amid all these are barges and lighters, yachts and pleasure boats, the sound of music, and the multitudes for whom a trip on the river by sail or steam is the most enticing of holidays. All these are there and more; but where is the silence so often ascribed to the great tidal highway? In the poet's dream.

A few minutes more by railway across Wennington marsh, and we come to Rainham, a place that looks bowery in summer-time with many elder-trees and willows; makes a show of trade with a barge or two in its muddy port, the little river Ingreburn, and has an old

church with a large squat tower. Here we alight once more for another exploration. It would be a pleasant walk to Upminster, a few miles inland, where Dr Derham lived so many years, combining pastoral duty with philosophical and scientific observations; caring for the bodies as well as the souls of his parishioners, and writing his book on *Physico-Theology*, one of the first, if not *the* first, developments of the argument of natural theology. But for the present our course must be in the opposite direction—to the scene of Dagenham Breach. After about two miles of road we cross the railway and enter the marshes by a track that reminds us of the roads of Foulness, and leads us straight to the edge of Dagenham lake; a large reedy sheet of water well known to anglers. Beyond it rises the river-wall to such a height that the topmasts only of passing vessels can be seen above it; and on the farther shore stands a small white cottage with lawn sloping down to the lake, which was for some years the summer residence of Elizabeth Fry, to whom the repose, absence of formalities, and the view of golden sunsets, rendered it an agreeable abode.

Mounting the great bank we look into Halfway Reach and upwards along Barking Reach, and across the expanse of marshes to the villages and manors that sprinkle the inland slopes. Among them, near Barking, is Eastbury, from the tower of which the conspirators in Gunpowder Plot hoped to see the blowing up of the parliament.

The whole distance from the Lea down to Purfleet is marsh from one and a half to two miles wide, which every spring-tide would cover were there no river-wall.

The wall, or bank, dates from a very early period; its height is calculated generally to four feet above high water. On the Scheldt, Elbe, and other rivers of the North Sea, the height is from ten to thirteen feet, and is found at times insufficient, owing to the great heaping up of the waters on the opposite coast by the prevalent westerly winds. An easterly wind with a spring-tide has often proved too much for the Thames banks; and the local histories tell of many an irruption of the waters, and of long-continued labours of reclamation. Here at Dagenham a breach took place in 1621, which was stopped by Vermuyden, whose name is well remembered in the fens. Again in 1707, during a flood and spring-tide driven by a north-easterly wind, the water "blew up" Vermuyden's sluice, and breached the bank. The gap at first was narrow, and might easily have been stopped had proper measures been taken; but being neglected the water flowed in and out, washed away the clay, the bed of peat containing ancient tree stems below it, and the underlying gravel, to a considerable depth. By this many acres of the marsh were utterly lost and washed into the river, there forming a shoal nearly a mile in length that blocked up half the channel. With every tide two thousand acres of the marshes inside were drowned, and at low water two great river-like arms were left, one of them more than a mile long, five hundred feet wide, and fifty feet deep, stretching across the Dagenham and Havering Levels.

The endeavours made to repair the damage were so long baffled, that Dagenham Breach became a word of alarming significance. The owners wasted more money

than the land was worth in attempts at reclamation, and then applied to parliament for aid, on the ground that the hindrance to the navigation was a subject of national importance. A grant was voted, and more money was wasted: for the tide washed in and out, carrying away caissons, old hulks, mounds of chalk, or whatever else was sunk to form a dam, until at last the breach was fifty feet deep and about two hundred in width. At length, after fifteen years of abortive labours, Captain Perry took the work in hand, and accomplished it at a further cost of £25,000, by driving in long piles well fitted to each other, and protecting their foundation by throwing in loads of clay. For five years did he labour at the arduous task, harassed by tidal accidents that delayed his progress and involved him in heavy costs, and suffering at times from attacks of fever and ague; a disease then very prevalent in all the lowlands of Essex. And though he succeeded in stopping the breach, he derived no profit from the operation, and petitioned parliament for relief, as set forth in the little book which he published on the subject.

The top of the bank is now fifty feet above low water, and the broad slope on each side shows that the thickness is proportionate. On the discharge of the waters the deepest hollows were left undrained; and they now form the lake of about fifty acres to which anglers in general and pike-fishers in particular have long resorted. With its reeds, willows, clear open reaches, and border of green pastures it is a pleasing scene to look down on from the lofty bank: a place where a contemplative mood might be indulged for

half a day. It is on record that the Royal Society Club—that band of philosophers—came down here in 1753, but whether for fishing, dining, or scientific research, is not certain. Those who wish to see the place in its present condition will do well to avoid delay, for a project is afloat for docks at Dagenham, and if, as is proposed, about one hundred and fifty acres should be excavated, and inclosed by the high ugly walls that seem inevitable with docks, all the rural and aquatic charm of Dagenham Breach will have disappeared for ever.

Again a few miles by rail, and I left the train at Barking: a town of unattractive appearance, with a tendency to look miserable in wet weather; where fishermen in big boots and blue jerseys may be seen on the quay, and where you will hardly grow enthusiastic, notwithstanding that it contains a fine old bell-tower, a good church with curious monuments, reminiscences of an abbey, and has on the outskirts remains of a Roman camp. The bell-tower, with pointed arch, forms a gateway to the churchyard, and is well worthy of examination. The chamber above the arch was formerly "the chapel of the Holy Rood lofte atte gate." Here in 670 was founded, by an Anglo-Saxon nobleman, a Benedictine abbey for nuns, which became the richest and noblest of the kind in England. The good work was promoted by St Erkenwald, that holy Bishop of London, whose little finger was of such virtue that the mere sight of one of its joints was a certain cure for mortal diseases, and whose sister Ethelburga was appointed the first abbess. One of her successors was the beautiful Wulfhild, favourite of the too

amorous King Edgar; and during the whole existence of the abbey it was presided over by some of the noblest ladies in the realm, and many a one who left a name in history, resorted to it as a residence or refuge. The cost of maintaining and repairing the river-wall was one of the obligations of the abbey which in some instances overtaxed its resources, notwithstanding that the abbess had the privilege of cutting wood in Hainault Forest for the strengthening of the banks.

The sexton's wife, who showed me the church, "could n't say she had ever heard tell of St Erkenwald;" but she spoke affectionately of the former rector, "who went away from Barking to that there St. Barnabas, sir, that people talked so much about. He did a deal of good here, sir, and was well liked in the parish."

If you are curious in epitaphs, examine the stone which stands against the east end of the church, and you may read concerning a certain churchwarden who died in 1670—

> Stay heare awhile & his sad fate deplore
> heare lyes the body of one Thomas More
> his name was More but now it may be said
> he is no more because that now he's dead
> and in this place doth lye sepulchared.

Mount to the top of the church-tower, and you will see how appropriate is the second syllable in the name of the town, to the locality. *Ing* — a meadow — perfectly describes the broad flat environment; and the prevalence of pasture-lands in this corner of Essex is shown by the number of names of places which term-

inate or begin with *ing:* Epping, Havering, Margaretting, Mannings, Sunnings, Ingreburn, and others. We have met with the same word in all our rambles between Thames and Tweed; and farther north we should find it as *Inch* on the banks of the Tay.

The river that winds past the town, and hence to the Thames is called Barking Creek, is the Roding: the same that we crossed in our forest rambles. It looks important below the lock, for the barges and sloops moored along the quay are numerous. If the landscape be not obscured by great drifts of smoke blown away from the mighty cloud of London, you can discern its manifold windings as it flows to the Thames; and on the eastern horizon the Langdon hills.

I crossed to the right bank of the stream, desirous to walk down to its outfall. A man whom I asked if there were a practicable path all the way, answered, "All right, you 'll go past the Devil's House, and come out at Gallions." What with the numerous windings which take you back again and again towards the church-tower and windmill, the great height of the bank, and the aspect of the creek itself, the walk is not uninteresting. On one side the view embraces East Ham Level, and the village church by which Stukeley lies buried; on the other Barking Level; the high ground behind Woolwich shuts in the southern prospect; in the south-west the trees of Greenwich park, and the Observatory, appear dimly through the smoke; and the noise of busy traffic is louder, and above all booms from time to time the tremendous roar of the mortars practising in Plumstead marshes. The thick rough grass is hidden in places by large beds of mallows,

nettles, and thistles, and the creek is so much encroached on by beds and clumps of reeds that you might fancy yourself in the remote parts of Norfolk. Here, as there, the wind makes weird music, and the water frets and ripples among the slender stalks; and there is a stack of reeds to complete the illusion. Such is the scene within three leagues of St Paul's, while the creek, increasing in width, flows the last two miles of its course.

The Devil's House, a building with a red roof, stands all alone in the midst of the pastures. For whose benefit he of the cloven foot haunts it I could not discover. Cloven feet of another kind are numerous in the green expanse, for hundreds of Scotch cattle are there turned in to recruit for the London market.

The creek falls into the Thames at the head of Barking Reach, sometimes called Tripcock Reach; and hence upwards as far as Woolwich is Gallions Reach. The mouth is narrowed by reeds, and a broad belt of reeds half a mile in length extends westwards from it along the margin of the Thames. At the extremity of the left bank the scene is disfigured by a distressingly ugly and noisome factory with a tall chimney.

It was the last afternoon of my holiday, so I sat down on the bank at the point where the two currents meet, and mused for an hour while looking forth across the broad stream. There was something in the scene to awaken a moralizing mood: the downward rush of the tide with its burden of ships; the steamers urging their upward way through the water; the suddenly recurring roar and shock of artillery, accompanied by clouds of white smoke that floated away and vanished

in the breeze; the busy murmur borne to the ear from the naval port deepened by the sound of hundreds of hammers in dockyard and arsenal, and the heavy din of machinery. There was something in all this that set me musing upon results of civilization and the too prevalent error that intellectual and not moral advancement is the best proof thereof; the while the reeds rustled, the swift stream broke with countless ripples on the bank, and the summer breeze blew pleasantly.

Rising at length, I slung on my knapsack for the last time—till the next summer—and walked up the bank of Gallions Reach: all the way within a strip of land which belongs to Kent. With every furlong as I advanced the noises of trade and toil grew louder, and more frequent became the drifts of smoke from the great city; and yet there was an impression of solitude, for the wide stream rolled on one side, the wider pastures spread on the other, and no living thing appeared on the bank except here and there a group of cattle ruminating on each side of a stile.

What a change has come over the scene since this chapter was written! Thousands of labourers have invaded the lonely pastures, and built the great embankment and sewers for the drainage of London; and where the great bed of reeds grew along the shore are now eleven acres of reservoirs, and the outfall of the greater part of the fifty-two million gallons of sewage with which the great city daily pollutes the royal river. That this should still be the case is an opprobrium to chemical and agricultural science. The southern outfall is at Crossness, about a mile and a half lower down on the opposite side. From Stratford

to Barking Creek the great sewers are above ground, resting side by side on a bed of concrete or on arches; crossing roads and lanes, the Lea and its numerous branches, four railways, under and over, and so to the outfall where the excavations and constructions are on the most prodigious scale. When viewed in detail on a walk down the line of the works the impression made on the mind by mere dimensions, the ingenious application of mechanical resources, of adaptation of means to ends, is one of combined admiration and astonishment.

The Low Level sewage will be brought down to West Ham marsh, thirty feet below the present surface, and it will there be pumped up into one of the three sewers which from that point extend down to the outfall. In digging for foundations a bed of peat from twelve to fourteen feet thick, containing stems of trees, is first met with resting on a layer of clay, and the latter on gravel. In one of my visits I saw stems of oak, yew, and willow, varying in diameter from twelve to eighteen inches. This is not an isolated case, for wherever the marshes have been breached along the course of the river there ancient timber has been found imbedded. I saw also thirty-two bronze celts and two lumps of metal from the maker's ladle which had been found in Plaistow marsh two feet below the surface. Since then lead coffins containing skeletons have been dug up in West Ham marsh. And it may be worth recording that in some sections of the sewers through which I walked there were remarkable echoes which repeated four syllables distinctly and answered intelligibly to parallelopipedon. The echo

was always most perfect when I spoke directly under one of the openings in the crown of the sewer.

But to return to our holiday.

At Gallions Point I had to quit the bank and pass round the rear of the North Woolwich pleasure-gardens, and came at once among rows of unfinished houses thrusting their ugly skeletons upon the smooth green meadow; and, strange contrast! there was pitched in the open space a gipsy camp: black wagon-tilts so grouped together as to resemble a Bedouin tent. "Give the poor gipsy a little bit of silver, and you'll have good luck, sir," said a blackeyed, shy-looking damsel, as I passed: "'T is always lucky to be kind to the gipsy."

A few yards farther brought me to the landing-place of the Woolwich ferry, and there my walk ended. On the opposite shore rose the great building sheds, the long blank walls, and the mean houses crowding one above another in the naval and military town. I stood gazing for a few minutes from the *Fisgard* and steamers moored in front of the dock-yard quay, to the heights in the rear where trees rise thickly among the houses, and the new hospital looks so red and new, and then betook myself to the railway-station.

The railway at a short distance north of the bank takes the course of Woolwich Reach, then curves across Plaistow Level, past Silvertown and the Victoria Docks: a district which lay within our view during our ramble on the uplands of Wanstead. Plaistow, once a rural village, is now hardly out of town, so

rapidly do houses encroach on these broad green meadows. A poem written in its praise a hundred years ago by an anonymous rhymer, is sufficiently historical in its particulars and unrestrained in its grammar to bear quotation.

> "Upon a fertile spot of land
> Does Plaistow, thriving Plaistow, stand,"

begins the anonymous author, and presently continues:

> "With wholsome fare our villa's stor'd;
> Our lands the best of corn afford;
> Not Hertford wheat, nor Derby rye,
> Nor Ipswich pease, can ours outvye:
> The largest ox that England bred,
> Was in our verdant pastures fed.
> Let Irish wights no longer boast
> The fam'd potatoes of their coast:
> Potatoes, now, are Plaistow's pride,
> Whole markets are from hence supply'd.
> Nor finer mutton can you spend,
> Than what our fat'ning marshes send.
> And in our farmers' yards you find
> Delicious fowls of divers kind;
> Whose cellars rarely ever fail,
> To keep a cask of nappy ale."

Then we hurry past Halleville and Canning Town, dependencies of the docks, and part of the district which has been described as "London over the Border:" a district where streets and rows of cottages extend in every direction, where rapidly as the dwellings multiply artisans and labourers appear in numbers sufficient to inhabit them.

Once as I journeyed across this district, a comfort-

able-looking old gentleman, who sat opposite me, said, as he pointed from the carriage window, "Do you see that row of houses, sir? I lost two hundred pound by them. No joke, sir, being landlord of such precious tenements as them. Why, sir, when I went round of a Monday mornin' to get in the rents, bless ye, sir, if they had n't gone off to Hampton Court, every man Jack of 'em, with the money as they should have paid me. What can you do with tenants like them, sir? It stands to reason as they had spent the money, they could n't pay their rent. I tried to persuade 'em into payin' the back rent, but bless ye, sir, I might as well have talked to the door-posts. And so I kept on being out o' pocket; and the way that sort o' people knocks the houses about is shameful, and then they bolts some fine night, and shoves the key under the door, or chucks it down the gully-hole. They 're very fond of chuckin' keys down gully-holes, that sort o' people is, sir. Yes, sir! I stood it a good while, 'cause you see I 'm good-natured, and could n't make up my mind to put in a broker; till, as I said before, I lost two hundred pound, and then I sold 'em, and blessed glad I was to get rid of 'em. No more house property for me, sir! The Bank of England never tells me they ain't ready, when I goes for my dividend, and three per cent.'s a good deal better than tenants as do n't pay." Here the speaker stopped and laughed heartily, then resumed with,—"Well, sir, I walked down to look at the place one day lately, and as soon as they saw me, they all come round me, singing out, 'Oh! Mr Easy, won't you buy the houses again? Do buy 'em again.' So says I, 'What, you 've got a man now as won't stand no non-

sense, have you? Puts the broker in once a week, does he? Well, it serves you right. I lost two hundred pound by ye. No, no! you don't catch me a-buyin' these houses any more.'" Here the old gentleman laughed again, and it appeared to me that he considered the result of his visit as a fair set-off for the loss of his money. We were two or three miles away from the houses by the time his confession ended. I have never crossed the district since without thinking of the curious facts in the natural history of the inhabitants then narrated.

The Lea separates us from Blackwall and the populous places that occupy the rear of the Isle of Dogs, beyond the limits of Essex; and the railway finishing its curve stretches up the valley of the tributary, a river whose name will long be cherished by history: as Drayton writes—

"And the old Lea boasts of the Danish blood;"

where though we look in vain for beauty, we can nevertheless find something to interest us with the help of our old chroniclers. It was in the neighbourhood of Bow that the Danes, having rowed up the river from the Thames, established themselves in a fortified camp, "when Kinge Alfrede passinge by, espied that the channel of the ryver might be in such sorte weakened, that they should want water to return withe their shippes: he caused therefore the water to be abated by two greate trenches, and settinge the Londoners upon theim, he made theim batteil: wherein they lost four of their capitaines, and a great number of their common souldiers, the reste flyinge into the castle which they had

builte. Not longe after, they weare so pressed that they forsoke all, and left their shippes as a prey to the Londoners; which breakinge some, and burninge other, conveyed the reste to London."

A walk of about a mile along the high-road westwards would bring us to the spot where Maud, queen of Henry I., raised a monument of utility to her own memory. As Stowe relates, "when she saw the forde to be dangerous for them that travelled by the old forde over the river of Lea (for she herself had been well washed in the water) caused two stone bridges to be builded, of the which one was situated over Lea, at the head of the town of Stratford, now called Bow, because the bridge was arched like a bow; a rare piece of work, for before that time the like had never been seen in England." Not only had travellers been well washed in the stream at Old Ford, but many lives had been lost, and delays were frequent. The corpse of St Erkenwald even was hindered from crossing by a flood when on the way from Barking to its burial-place in London. The queen's bridge was pulled down about the year 1840. It had three arches, as may be seen in old engravings.

The train running northwards passes the relics of West Ham Abbey, crosses the five branches of the Lea, known locally as Pudding Mill river, City Mills river, Waterworks river, Abbey Mills river, and Channelsea, speeding into a district that seems given up to roads and railways, and hurrying trains; where fences of old barrel staves and rails stuck full of tenter-hooks, are a shabby substitute for the green hedgerows, which a few years ago made the air sweet with May blossom in

spring-time; where open spaces become every year fewer and smaller; where here and there a few village-like aspects are still discoverable; where at Old Ford, the place at which Watling Street crossed the Lea, Roman relics are still to be seen; where the crowd of chemical works, foundries, glass-works, distilleries, and other smoky establishments, presents us with a picture of the ugly manufacturing towns of the North. What a change has come over this neighbourhood since Chaucer wrote about the School of Stratforde-at-Bowe, and the days when our cheerful-hearted friend Izaak Walton sauntered through honeysuckled lanes towards Tottenham High Cross, or in meadows that border the Lea, with his angle, delighting in the sight and scent of flowers, and saying to himself, "I envy not him that eats better meat than I do; nor him that is richer, or that wears better clothes than I do: I envy nobody but him, and him only, that catches more fish than I do."

"Change here for Hackney, Dalston, Islington, Camden Town!" and so forth, is the cry at Stratford Bridge. I changed to a train which, presently crossing the Lea, bore me from Essex to Middlesex. Eastern England, the land of our holiday travel, was left behind, and I journeyed homewards by the familiar route of the North London Railway.

CHAPTER XXII.

BY WAY OF FAREWELL.

And now, gracious reader, give me leave to add a parting word. The dates recorded here and there in the foregoing chapters will have kept you aware of the time at which the perambulations therein described took place. The cold wet summer and the windy summer have now passed into history; and it may seem to you that my publication has been delayed. Explanation of this seeming delay would be interesting only to my private friends. Suffice it here to say that the intervening years have not been idle years, and that the lengthened time has enabled me by fresh journeys to add to the results of the first two seasons' travel. Of course in the interval there have occurred many changes, for which you and those who live on the spot will have known how to make allowance, and perhaps to use them as an index of our material progress, which in this quarter of the century is surprisingly rapid. Railways which were planned only when

I walked over the ground, are now constructed and busy with traffic; works of drainage and of land-reclamation have advanced; schools and churches have been built, and in a few instances labourers are better housed than they were. And among changes of another kind I wish to mention that the Vicar no longer dwells in the pleasant vicarage where I first made acquaintance with him; that Colonel (now General) Taylor has been succeeded at Shoeburyness by Colonel Eardley-Wilmot; and that in more than one instance a voice that bade me welcome and gladdened me by its tones, has been silenced for ever by death. But as my narrative was written before the changes took place my impression of Eastern England, taken for what it is worth, retains its original character.

And with this I must bid you farewell, for the time of our meeting again appears so very uncertain that I am unwilling to let pass this opportunity for a leave-taking without a hearty acknowledgment of the pleasure I have derived from your company and your sympathy. Many a mile had I walked before we became acquainted, little dreaming of ever writing a book, or that a subject so presumably familiar as English topography could win the sympathy of unprofessional readers; but your company summer after summer has shewn me that interest in the subject is not confined to antiquaries and students of history. From first to last my walks in the three kingdoms amount to fifteen thousand miles; fair, honest walking, with knapsack on shoulder for the most part; and the more I have walked, the more have I discovered that the subject is inexhaustible. It is a subject in

which different orders of mind may engage: the thoughtful scholar, the poet, the scientific inquirer, the social observer, each one in hopeful confidence that his talent will be well applied and generously recompensed.

Summer after summer have we gone forth together to enjoy air and sunshine,

> "And have no roof above our head,
> But that whereon the gods do tread;"

and under these agreeable circumstances we have seen a large extent of the land we all love best—our own. From the Solway to the Bristol Channel, aided here and there by broad views from high hills, we have looked all down the western-side; from the New Forest to the Land's End we have seen the wild yet grand and picturesque coast which the south-western counties oppose to the dark blue waters of the Channel; from Barden Hill we have gazed far and wide across the Midland region; and now with this walk in Eastern England we have completed our survey of our eastern shore (excepting a part of the coast of Durham) from the Thames to the Tweed. It is a perambulation which perhaps entitles us to take easy holidays in the days to come.

I once thought to start from the Thames in the opposite direction and connect this eastern travel with Southampton: the starting-point where we first became companions. The coast of Kent, Sussex, and Hampshire, and the interior landscapes of those three counties, and of Surrey, would well repay an explora-

tion, as many a sojourn and ramble therein have assured me; but I have no expectation now that the thought will be realized.

Encouragements, if such were needed, have not been wanting. "Come to our county, we will use you well," is an invitation which has reached me from many a shire, and from warm-hearted inviters whom I have never seen.

But have we not accomplished enough? Many a pleasant spot have we visited and many a soul-stirring association revived in the walks we have taken together. Often to us the common things of Nature have had an uncommon significance, and we have found delight in the aspect of clouds, the swaying of trees, the play of ripples, and in their occasional wafts of beauty have felt a further charm. At our going forth the scent of hay has filled the air, prevailing more and more if our course were northwards; and our wanderings have been prolonged until in our homeward way we have seen the brown reapers with sickle in hand opening the great yearly festival of the Ingathering.

What hours of gladness we have enjoyed together consequent on these sweet influences, so that in our going and coming we have borne with us a temper which like the face of Una has

> "shined bright
> And made a sunshine in the shady place;"

and now we must hope that the same influence will attend our recollections, and keep our minds free from the "deadening effect of familiarity" with our daily occupation.

Farewell,—and let me conclude with a passage from a favourite author. "Whatever strengthens our local attachments is favourable both to individual and national character," writes Southey; and pursues, "our home,—our birth-place,—our native land,—think for a while what the virtues are which arise out of the feelings connected with these words; and if thou hast any intellectual eyes, thou wilt then perceive the connection between topography and patriotism."

THE END.

INDEX.

ACLE bridge, i. 83, 163.
Adlingfleet, ii. 31.
Aldborough, ii. 158.
Alde, river, ii. 160.
Alford, ii. 5, 18.
Althorne, ii. 232.
Althorpe, ii. 33.
Ambresbury Banks, i. 81.
Ant, river, i. 170.
Ashby Puerorum, i. 300.
Ashingdon, ii. 233.
Attleborough, i. 41.
Audley End, i. 38.
Axholme, Isle of, ii. 31, 34.
Aylsham, i. 50.

Bain, river, i. 297.
Barking, ii. 288.
——— Creek, ii. 288.
——— Reach, ii. 288, 294.
——— Side, i. 26, 27.
Barkston, ii. 67.
Barsham, i. 210.
Barton, ii. 30.
Barton Broad, i. 172, 175.
Beacon Hill, i. 194.
Beccles, ii. 181.
Bedford river, i. 254, 256.
Beeston Regis, i. 195.
——— Priory, i. 195.
Belaugh, i. 80.
Belton, ii. 67, 185.
Belvoir, ii. 71.
——— Vale of, ii. 73.
Benfleet, ii. 273.
Bildeston, ii. 110.
Bileigh Abbey, ii. 229.
Black Notley, ii. 215.
Blackwall, ii. 300.
Blackwater, river, ii. 213, 216, 228.
Blakeney, i. 197, 199, 201.
——— Overfalls, i. 200.
Blickling, i. 50.
Blythe, river, ii. 172.
Bolingbroke, i. 294.
Boothby, ii. 81.
Booton, i. 50.
Boston, i. 290.
——— Deeps, i. 230, 292.
——— Stump, i. 235.
Bottesford, ii. 73.
Bourn, ii. 87.
Bow, ii. 301.
Bradfield Combust, ii. 108.
Brain, river, ii. 226.
Braintree, ii. 215, 226.
Brampton, ii. 44.
Brancaster i. 226.
——— Scald Heads, i. 231.
Brandeston, i. 46.
Brandon, i. 40.

Braxted, ii. 213.
Brent, river, ii. 192.
Bret, river, ii. 110.
Brettenham, ii. 109.
Breyden Water, i. 127, 148, 157; ii. 186.
Broken Svarte, the, i. 197.
Bromholm Priory, i. 183.
Broomfield, ii. 216, 222, 226.
Brown Ridge, the, i. 149.
Buckhurst Hill, i. 18, 26.
Bungay, ii. 183.
Bure, river, i. 78, 127, 163.
Burgh, ii. 5, 19.
——— Castle, ii. 185.
Burghley House, ii. 89.
Burnham, ii. 233.
——— Deepdale, i. 226.
——— Overy, i. 225.
——— Thorpe, i. 224.
Burnley Hall, i. 165.
Bury St Edmund's, ii. 100.

Caister Castle, i. 158.
——— (Lincolnshire), ii. 57.
——— (on the sea), i. 127, 149, 157, 161; ii. 186.
Caister (Venta Icenorum), i. 151.
Cam, river, i. 38.
Candle Dyke, i. 168.
Canewdon, ii. 233.
Canning Town, ii. 298.
Canvey Island, ii. 271.
Castle Hedingham, ii. 198.
Castle Rising, i. 235.
Catfield, i. 172.
Caythorpe, ii. 66.
Chelmer, river, ii. 224, 226, 228.
Chelmsford, ii. 216, 226, 232.
Chigwell Row, i. 19.
Chingford, i. 15, 16.
——— Green, i. 17.
Cleethorpes, ii. 24.
Cley, i. 197, 198.
Coggeshall, ii. 202.
Colchester, ii. 132.
Colne Engaine, ii. 200.
——, river, ii. 132, 137, 200, 230.
Colsterworth, ii. 80, 81.
Coltishall, i. 78.
Coningsby, i. 295.
Copt Hall, i. 31.
Corby, ii. 87.
Costessey, i. 44, 52.
Covehithe Broad, ii. 174.
——— Ness, ii. 174.
Cowbit, i. 277.
Crayford Ness, ii. 287.
Creake Abbey, i. 224.
Cromer, i, 44, 189, 194.
Cross-Keys Wash, i. 259.
Crouch, river, ii. 232, 233.
Croyland, i. 278.

Dagenham Breach, ii. 288.
Danbury Hills, ii. 214, 227, 232.
Danelagh, the, i. 2.
Dartford Creek, ii. 287.
Deben, river, ii. 146, 157.
Decoy Broad, i. 106.
Deeping, St James's, i. 287.
Denton, ii. 71.
Dercham, i. 39, 211, 217.
Dersingham, i. 234.
Devil's Dyke, i. 38, 217.
——— Throat, the, i. 191.
Dick Turpin's Cave, i. 29.
Diss, ii. 97.
Dogger Bank, ii. 11.
Don, river, ii. 34.
Drove End, i. 261, 266.
Dunmow, ii. 224.
Dunston Pillar, ii. 63.
Dunwich, ii. 164, 171.
Dydels' Reach, i. 101.

Earl's Colne, ii. 199, 226.
Eastbury, ii. 288.
Easton Broad, ii. 174.

East Tilbury, ii. 279.
Eastwick Head, ii. 243.
Eccles, i. 179.
Edmonton, i. 16.
Elmswell, ii. 99.
Ely, i. 38, 40.
Enfield, i. 29.
Epping, i. 31, 32.
——— Forest, ii. 284.
Epworth, ii. 34.
Ermine Street, ii. 48, 57, 65.
Essex, forest of, i. 9, 15, 17; ii. 284.
Euston, ii. 103.
Eye, ii. 98.

Fairlop Oak, i. 23.
——— Plain, i. 19, 22.
Fairsted, ii. 215.
Fakenham, i. 211; ii. 103.
Fambridge, ii. 234.
Feering, ii. 203.
Felixstow, ii. 143.
Fens, great level of the, i. 251, 255, 271, 281.
Ferriby, ii. 31.
Fidler's Reach, ii. 282.
Filby, i. 163.
Firsby, ii. 5.
Fornham, St Genevieve, ii. 103.
Fossdyke, the, ii. 44.
——— Wash, i. 292.
Foulness, ii. 234, 241.
Frettenham, i. 77.
Frinton, ii. 139.
Fulbeck, ii. 66.

Gainsborough, ii. 41.
Gallions Reach, ii. 294.
Garianonunum, i. 122.
Gaywood, i. 238.
Gedney Dyke, i. 269.
Gibraltar Point, ii. 10.
Gipping, river, ii. 150, 152.
Golding's Hill, i. 34.
Gorleston, i. 136, 148; ii. 178.
Grainthorpe, ii. 20.
Granby, ii. 73.
Grange Hill, i. 19, 27.
Grantham, ii. 67.
Gravesend, ii. 272, 282.
——— Reach, ii. 279.
Gray's Thurrock, ii. 282.
Great Hautbois, i. 79.
Great Saxham, ii. 103.
Great Totham, ii. 214.
Greenstead, i. 33; ii. 201, 226.
Greenwich, i. 13; ii. 293.
Grimsby, ii. 25.

Hadleigh, ii. 131, 272.
Hainault forest, i. 18, 20, 22, 23.
Halfway Reach, ii. 288.
Halleville, ii. 298.
Halstead, ii. 199.
Haltham, i. 296.
Happisburgh, i. 165, 172, 181, 185.
Harlaxton, ii. 71.
Harston, ii. 78.
Harwich, ii. 140.
Hatfield Chace, ii. 37.
Haughley, ii. 99.
Havering-atte-Bower, i. 20; ii. 284.
Haxey, ii. 40.
Heacham, i. 233.
Heigham, i. 163.
——— Sound, i. 168.
Hempstead, i. 179.
Herrings, i. 146.
Hessle, ii. 30.
Heydon, i. 47, 48.
Hickling Broad, i. 164, 168.
High Beech, i. 27, 28, 30, 34.
High Fen Dyke, i. 175.
High Laver, i. 33.
High Toynton, i. 299.
Hinchinbrook, ii. 95.
Hitcham, ii. 110, 191.
Holbeach, i. 270.

Holderness, ii. 23.
Holkham, i. 219.
——— Hall, i. 222.
Holland, i. 263.
Holme, i, 228.
Honey Lane, i. 34.
Honington, ii. 103.
Hope, the, ii. 273.
Hor, river, i. 82.
Horncastle, i. 297.
Hornchurch, ii. 284.
Horndon-on-the-Hill, ii. 273.
Horning, i. 101.
Horsey Mere, i. 165, 167.
Horsford, i. 41, 43.
——— Castle, i. 76.
Horsham St Faith's, i. 43, 74.
Horstead, i. 79.
Houghton, i. 44, 234.
Hoveton Broad, i. 98.
How Hill, i. 171.
Hoxne, i. 186; ii. 98.
Hull, ii. 29.
Humber, the, ii. 19, 23, 30, 34.
Hundreds, the, ii. 230.
Hunstanton, i. 228.
Huntingdon, ii. 95.
Huttoft, ii. 15.

Idle, river, ii. 34.
Ilford, i. 13.
Ingham, i. 172, 178.
Ingoldisthorpe, i. 234.
Ingoldmells Point, ii. 14.
Ingreburn, river, ii. 287.
Intwood, i. 41.
Ipswich, ii. 150.
Irstead, i. 3, 174.
——— Broad, i. 172, 175.
——— Shoals, i. 173.
Isle of Grain, ii. 271.

Junction Broad, i. 163.

Keadby, ii. 33.
Kessingland, ii. 175.
Kesteven, i. 293.
Kettlethorpe, ii. 44.
King John's House, i. 261.
Kirby, ii. 138.
Kirkby, i. 295.
Knaith, ii. 43.
Knoll, the, i. 149.

Landguard Fort, ii. 144, 146.
Langdon Hills, ii. 272, 274.
Lark, river, ii. 101.
Latchingdon, ii. 231.
Lavenham, ii. 192.
Lea, river, i. 10, 16, 29, 35, 36; ii. 300, 302.
Lea, river, branches of, ii. 301.
Leadenham, ii. 66.
Leigh, ii. 270.
Leman and Ower, the, i. 179, 197.
Lessingham, i. 179.
Levington, ii. 149.
Lexden, ii. 134.
Leyton, i. 10.
Leytonstone, i. 11.
Lincoln, ii. 44, 50.
——— Cathedral, ii. 54, 72.
——— Heath, ii. 59, 62.
Lindsey, i. 293.
Littleborough, ii. 44.
Little Dunmow, ii. 224.
Little Maplestead, ii. 197.
Little Waldingfield, ii. 194.
Little Welnetham, ii. 108.
Lothing, Lake, ii. 178.
Loughton, i. 10, 27, 34.
Louth, ii. 4, 19, 21.
Lower Hope, the, ii. 279.
Lowestoft, i. 148; ii. 177.
Low Leyton, i. 10.
Ludham, i. 170, 172.
Lutton, i. 263.
Lynn, i. 238, 253.
——— West, i. 241.

Mablethorpe, ii. 18.
Maldon, ii. 228.
Manningtree, ii. 149.
Maplin Sand, ii. 243, 245.
Marshland, i. 245, 254, 258.
Martham, i. 164.
Mautby, i. 162.
——— Swim, i. 127.
Meals, the, i. 200.
Mersey Island, ii. 137.
Messing, ii. 204.
Minsmere, ii. 165.
Monk's Eleigh, ii. 192.
Morton Hall, i. 48.
Mousehold Heath, i. 69.
Mundesley, i. 186.
Muston, ii. 74.
Mutford, ii. 179.

Nacton, ii. 149.
Narborough, i. 217.
Navenby, ii. 65.
Nene, river, i. 258, 272, 277; ii. 95.
New Buckenham, i. 8.
New Holland, ii. 29.
Newport Gate, ii. 49.
Nore Light, ii. 244, 245.
Northfleet Hope, ii. 282.
North Somercotes, ii. 20.
North Woolwich, ii. 297.
Norwich, i. 41, 44, 58, 148, 165.
Nottingham, ii. 72.

Oakham, ii. 96.
Oates, i. 33.
Old Ford, ii. 302.
Orfordness, ii. 146, 161.
Orwell, river, ii. 140, 149.
Osterfield, ii. 31.
Oulton Broad, ii. 179.
Ouse, river, i. 40, 242, 251, 254.
——— (Yorkshire), ii. 31.
Overstrand, i. 188.
Oyster fishery, ii. 235.

Pakefield, ii. 177.
Palling, i. 185.
Paston, i. 185.
Pedder's Way, the, i. 234.
Peterborough, i. 40, 285; ii. 95.
Pitsea Creek, ii. 273.
Plaistow, ii. 298.
Pleshy, ii. 219.
Prittlewell, ii. 272.
Purfleet, i. 19; ii. 283.
Pyfleet Creek, ii. 137.

Queen Elizabeth's Lodge, i. 17.

Rainham, ii. 287.
Ranworth Broad, i. 109.
——— Decoy, i. 106.
Rayleigh, ii. 272.
Redmile, ii. 73.
Reedham, ii. 184.
Revesby, i. 294.
Rivenhall, ii. 215.
Roach, river, ii. 240.
Roaring Middle, the, i. 230.
Rochford, ii. 256.
Roding, river, i. 13, 14; ii. 293.
Rodney, the, ii. 226.
Rollesby, i. 164.
Romford, i. 19, 22.
Runham, i. 124.
——— Swim, i. 127.
Runton, i. 194.

Saffron Walden, i. 38; ii. 224.
Sall, i. 50.
Sallows Broad, i. 98.
Saltfleet, ii. 19.
Salthouse, i. 198.
Sandringham, i. 235.
Saxham, i. 222.
Saxilby, ii. 44.
Saxmundham, ii. 158.
Scrivelsby, i. 296.
Scroby Sand, i. 149.

Sheerness, ii. 272.
Sheringham, i. 194, 196.
Shoeburyness, ii. 248, 259, 272.
Shooter's Hill, ii. 274.
Sible Hedingham, ii. 199.
Sidestrand, i. 188.
Silvertown, ii. 297.
Sizewell, ii. 164.
Skegness, ii. 12.
Skillington, ii. 80.
Slaughden, Vale of, ii. 160.
Sleaford, ii. 65.
Smeeth, the, i. 258.
Snaresbrook, i. 13.
Snettisham, i. 233.
Somerleyton, ii. 184.
Somersby, i. 299, 301.
Somerton Broad, i. 165.
Southend, ii. 256, 269.
Southwold, ii. 172.
——— bay, ii. 165.
Spalding, i. 272.
Spilsby, i. 300.
Spurn, the, ii. 23.
St Benet's Abbey, i. 118, 169.
St Edmund's Point, i. 227, 229, 231.
St Helen's, ii. 43.
St Olave's, ii. 184.
St Osyth's, ii. 137.
Stalham, i. 176.
Stamford, ii. 87.
Stanford-le-Hope, ii. 273.
Stathern, ii. 73.
Stiffkey, i. 200.
——— Overfalls, i. 200.
Stisted, ii. 226.
Stockwith, ii. 40.
Stoke Bardolph, ii. 73.
—— Rochford, ii. 79.
Stokesby, i. 122, 163; ii. 186.
Stort, river, i. 38.
Stour, river, ii. 140, 149, 196.
Stow Langtoft, ii. 103.
Stratford, i. 9; ii. 302.
Sudbury, ii. 195.
Sutton, ii. 15.
——— Bridge, i. 258.
——— St Mary's, i. 260.
——— Wash-way, i. 257.
Swaffham, i. 217.
Syston, ii. 67.

Tattershall, i. 293.
Taverham, i. 53.
Terrington, i. 257.
Tetford, i. 304; ii. 1.
Tetney Lock, ii. 21.
Thames Haven, ii. 273.
——— mouth of, ii. 246.
——— Vale of, i. 13, 18, 20; ii. 274.
Thaxted, ii. 224.
Thetford, i. 40.
Thorn, river, ii. 34.
Thorney, i. 286; ii. 95.
Thornham, i. 228.
Thornton Abbey, ii. 29.
Thorpe-le-Soken, ii. 138.
Thrigby, i. 163.
Thurn, river, i. 163, 167, 168.
Tilbury Fort, ii. 276.
Tiptree, ii. 205.
——— Heath, ii. 213.
Titchwell, i. 228.
Torksey, ii. 44.
Trent, river, ii. 31, 34, 41, 73.
Trimmingham, i. 188.
Troston, ii. 103.

Uffington, ii. 90.
Upminster, ii. 288.

Venta Icenorum, i. 64.

Wainfleet, i. 280; ii. 6.
Wake Arms, the, i. 31, 34.
Wakering, ii. 246.
Wake's Colne, ii. 200.
Walberswick, ii. 172.

Walcot Gap, i. 182.
Wallasey Island, ii. 233, 240.
Walpoles, the, i. 257.
Walsingham, i. 203.
Waltham, i. 29, 34.
——— Cross, i. 36.
——— forest, i. 9.
Walthamstow, i. 15.
Walton Ferry, ii. 142, 148.
Walton-on-the-Naze, ii. 138.
Wanstead, i. 13.
——— Flats, i. 11.
——— House, i. 12.
Warham, i. 200.
Wash, the, i. 229, 242, 245, 250; ii. 10.
Watersmoke, i. 175, 193, 199.
Waveney, river, ii. 97, 180, 186.
Waybourn, i. 197.
Welbourne, ii. 66.
Welland, river, i. 272, 276; ii. 95.
Well Bank, the, i. 197; ii. 11.
Wellingore, ii. 66.
Wells, i. 202, 217.
Wensum, river, i. 48, 49, 52, 53, 211.
West Butterwick, ii. 33.
West Thurrock, ii. 283.
Weybridge Priory, i. 83.
Whaplode, i. 272.
Whatton, ii. 73.
Wheeley, ii. 138.
White's Colne, ii. 200.
Whittlesea mere, i. 254; ii. 96.
Wickham, Bishop's, ii. 214.
Winceby, i. 298.
Winteringham, ii. 31.
Winterton, i. 124, 127, 165.
——— Ness, i. 165.
Wisbeach, i. 257.
Witham, ii. 216.
———, river, i. 292, 297; ii. 44, 45, 57, 80, 81.
Witton Hall, i. 183.
Wolds, the, i. 297, 300; ii. 2, 57.
Woodbridge, ii. 157.
——— Haven, ii. 146.
Woodford, i. 14, 18, 27, 34.
——— Bridge, i. 14, 18.
——— Green, i. 14.
——— Row, i. 14.
——— Wells, i. 14.
Woodham Mortimer, ii. 228.
Woolpit, ii. 99.
Woolsthorpe (Leicestershire), ii. 72.
Woolsthorpe (Lincolnshire), ii. 81, 82.
Woolterton, i. 45.
Woolwich, i. 13; ii. 293.
Wroxham, i. 85, 92.
——— Broad, i. 86.
Wymondham, i. 41.

Yantlet Creek, ii. 271.
Yare, river, i. 136, 138, 143, 150, 151, 158; ii. 178, 186.
Yarmouth, i. 3, 124; ii. 186.
——— Roads, i. 148.

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